

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية "الرأي"

Sudan accused of impeding kala azar battle

GENEVA (AP) — The Sudanese government is preventing relief workers reaching an estimated 400,000 people at risk from a killer epidemic in the south of the country, U.N. and aid officials said Friday. The charity Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders) said it was unable to gain access to the worst affected areas in the western Upper Nile region, and feared the disease would spread as a result. An estimated 60,000 Sudanese have already died of the disease called leishmaniasis or kala-azar, which is spread by a parasite carried by sandflies, according to the organisation. Sudanese health officials have disputed the estimates. Sadeq Mahjoub, director of preventive medicine at the Ministry of Health, said Thursday there was no information to suggest the disease had reached epidemic proportions. Meanwhile, United Nations spokeswoman Therese Gastaut said a top U.N. relief official was in Sudan for talks with the government on improving access for aid organisations. Early last year Sudan's military government forced most private aid groups to withdraw from southern Sudan, the scene of a nine-year-old civil war. The break-up of the rebel movement and subsequent factional fighting has further increased problems for international relief efforts.

France, Belgium send troops to Zaire

KINSHASA (AP) — France and Belgium sent troops Friday to Kinshasa, Zaire after rampaging soldiers killed the French ambassador in an attack on his embassy. At least 45 people were killed and 130 wounded in the attack, one relief agency reported. Hundreds of foreigners sought refuge in embassy compounds Friday, as troops loyal to President Mobutu Sese Seko clashed with soldiers who backed a pro-democracy movement. Those killed included at least seven foreigners, according to doctors, diplomats and businessmen. Soldiers warned residents to stay off the streets after 8 p.m. (1900 GMT), claiming a curfew had been ordered and violators would be shot, said a businessman who requested anonymity. A small contingent of French troops arrived by late afternoon, and the gunfire had died down, the businessman said. "It seems we are heading for new confrontation within the army," said Foreign Minister Willy Claes of Belgium, the country that formerly ruled Zaire as a colony. Soldiers revolted Thursday when they were paid in the five-million Zaire notes Mr. Mobutu began printing recently (see page 8).

Volume 17 Number 5220

AMMAN SATURDAY, JANUARY 30, 1993, SHA'BAN 7, 1413

Price: Jordan 100 fils; Saudi Arabia 1.50 riyals; UAE 1.50 dirhams

questioned on Beirut arrest

SYDNEY (AP) — Three Arab agents were being questioned Friday in connection with the arrest of a Cypriot man at Beirut airport on charges of possession of explosives, authorities said. Syllouris, 24, a lawyer in Nicosia, was arrested Tuesday minutes before boarding a Jette East Airlines (MEA) flight to Cyprus. Lebanese police found a stick of dynamite and 100 grammes of the explosive Semtex strapped to his chest. Two Lebanese investigators were taking part in the interrogations of the students detained by Cyprus police, the Cyprus Agency reported. No names were disclosed. In Lebanon, military prosecutor Nasri Shouk said Wednesday that the other dynamite sticks were covered in a tape recorder in Syllouris' suitcase but no detonator was found, indicating Syllouris did not intend to blow up the plane Tuesday.

snapped Iranian and murdered

AMMAN (AP) — The mutilated body of a former Iranian army officer kidnapped last December has been found buried in a shallow grave near Istanbul, police said. The victim, former Iranian army Captain Abbas Ghazizadeh, reportedly was a bodyguard of Shah of Iran, who was toppled in 1979 in an Islamic revolution. Capt. Ghazizadeh, 45, worked for a Paris-based Iranian human rights group and was abducted near his home in an suburb by five bearded men speaking Farsi, his wife Shira told police the day of the kidnapping. Police said, without elaboration, that interrogation of recently detained Iranian-backed militants led to the grave in Istanbul, a summer resort on the coast of the Marmara Sea, about 45 kilometres southeast of Istanbul. The arrest of the guerrillas had not previously been reported.

emeni bootlegger recuted in Riyadh

JBAI (R) — A Yemeni man convicted of brewing and distributing alcohol was executed in Riyadh Friday, the official Saudi Press Agency said. Quoting a statement from the Saudi Interior Ministry, it said Abdul Wahid Al Jarashi was sentenced to death after being expelled from the country on six previous occasions for distributing alcohol and drugs. Each time he was expelled to Saudi Arabia illegal, the statement said.

ajik authorities impose emergency

ISHANBE, Tajikistan (AP) — Tajikistan declared a state of emergency Friday along its border with Afghanistan, according to news reports. The former Soviet republic has been torn by civil war for months and accuses Islamic militants in Afghanistan of aiding and arming its opponents. The decree bans virtually all political activity, demonstrations, strikes and meetings, the news agency ITAR-TASS reported. It said the ban was imposed to "restore order and legal security, ensure security, end border violations and smuggling, and disarm illegal armed units." Government forces ousted opposition fighters from Dushanbe, the capital, at the end of last year and have been slowly widening their control over the impoverished Central Asian nation. The government imposed a state of emergency on capital shortly after ousting opposition forces.

gerians kill 10 fundamentalists

GIERS (R) — Algerian riot forces shot dead two Islamic fundamentalists in a gun battle inside a mosque on Wednesday, para-military gendarme headquarters said. The gendarmes, quoted by the official news agency APS, said two men were wounded in a fight in Bordj Bou Arreridj, 100 kilometres southeast of Algiers, as the two fundamentalists tried to flee the town. It said the men had just attacked a mosque and stolen its vehicle. Latest deaths brought to at least 23 the number of Muslim fundamentalists killed this year.

Israel seeks ways to stall U.N. action

Combined agency dispatches

PROSPECTS OF a compromise emerged Friday over the issue of the Palestinians expelled to Lebanon, as officials said Israel was reviewing the approximately 400 cases again and that some evictees may be allowed to return. The move followed a high court ruling Thursday which upheld the Dec. 17 expulsions, throwing the ball back to Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's government. Israel has refused to comply with U.N. Security Council Resolution 799 calling for the men to be returned. The United States has also exerted pressure on Israel to resolve the issue. Israel argues that the evictees, now stranded in a tent camp in southern Lebanon, were ring-leaders behind a wave of attacks staged by Hamas and Islamic Jihad militants against Israeli targets in Israel and the occupied territories. Mr. Rabin said after Thursday's ruling that security officials would review the cases of all the evictees, even those who refused Israel's offer to appeal. Oded Ben-Ami, spokesman for the defence ministry also headed by Mr. Rabin, explained Friday that the review was part of the government's promise to the justices in a written argument against the appeals filed by evictees' families and civil rights lawyers.

"If there are any more mistakes, we will stand up and say there was an error and we are returning the person," Mr. Ben-Ami said. He said attorney general Yosef Harish had promised the review after justices asked him to explain how the government could be "sure there aren't any other mistakes" among the evictees. Israel has already admitted that 16 of the 415 expelled were sent away in error. Fourteen of them have returned. Israeli newspapers and radio reports said Friday it was likely that dozens of evictees could be returned as a result of the new case review. No time estimate or figures were given. Mr. Ben-Ami said it was too soon to give figures. He said the review was not ordered to tone down international criticism of the expulsions but acknowledged the move could help Israel out of the diplomatic crisis. "Even if there is a way here" to resolve the crisis, Mr. Ben-Ami said, "that's not the reason. The review wasn't to save face but because of the promise to the high court." Earlier Friday Mr. Rabin's spokesman in the prime ministry, Gad Ben-Ari, said: "It may be that after it is completed, we may bring some, perhaps dozens, back to Israel." He would not elaborate. The review is separate from the advisory committees appointed in the wake of the court ruling to hear the cases of expellees who decide to appeal. So far none have filed appeals, maintaining Israel must reverse the orders against all of them. Mr. Ben-Ami accused the evictees' spokesman, Gaza physician Abdul

Evictees shun appeal process

MARJ AL ZOHOOR, Lebanon (Agencies) — Palestinians expelled by Israel refused Friday to meet an Israeli officer sent to receive their appeals of their expulsions. "We don't have any intention to go to Zehraya because we don't like to give legitimacy to the Israeli court," said Aziz Dweik, a spokesman for the expellees. "We will not go and we will not see any of the Israeli people," said Mr. Dweik, a geography professor among almost 400 expelled Palestinians in a tent camp just north of Israel's self-proclaimed "security zone" in southeast Lebanon. Zehraya is a gateway on the northeastern edge of the zone. It has been blocked since Israel expelled the men six weeks ago. After Israel's high court upheld the expulsion on Thursday, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's office said an Israeli army officer would be sent to Zehraya Friday to receive petitions. Dr. Dweik stressed that the expellees "do not intend to give legitimacy to the Israeli court over the U.N. Security Council."

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Jordanians, Palestinians assail Israeli ruling, urge U.N. action

By Sama Attiyeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordanians and Palestinians Friday condemned an Israeli court verdict upholding expulsions of Palestinians and urged the U.N. Security Council to adopt punitive measures against the Jewish state. "The Israeli court decision is but another link in a series of unjust decisions taken by the Israeli occupation authorities which violate international law and the United Nations resolutions," Prime Minister Sharif Zaid Ben Shaker said in a statement Thursday. Sharif Zaid urged the Security Council to act promptly to ensure the implementation of Resolution 799, which calls on Israel to reverse its Dec. 17 expulsion of more than 400 Palestinians, and to force the Jewish state to comply with the requirements of international law. "The world organisation should adopt a single criteria in

implementing Security Council resolutions and should find the right mechanism for the implementation of the resolution on the evictees to ensure their repatriation," the prime minister added in a statement carried by the Jordan News Agency, Petra. In its ruling Thursday, the Israeli high court upheld the Israeli government's decision to expel 415 Palestinians to South Lebanon. The evictees have since then been stranded between Lebanese and Israeli army lines. Israel says the expelled Palestinians are Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) and Islamic Jihad activists. The two groups have been accused of killing six Israeli army soldiers and policemen. The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) has submitted a draft resolution to the Security Council to impose limited sanctions against Israel to force it to repatriate the expelled Palestinians. PLO Executive Committee member Yasser Abed Rabbo has called for an urgent Security Council meeting to impose sanctions on Israel. He has also called for an Arab meeting on

the issue of the expulsions and called for an Arab boycott of the next round of multilateral talks. PLO officials told the Jordan Times that the Israeli court decision further contributed to Palestinian rejection of participating in the next but as yet unscheduled round of bilateral peace talks with Israel. The PLO, with strong support from the Palestinian negotiators, insisted that their participation in the next round of talks depended on whether Israel decided to repatriate the expelled Palestinians. Chief Palestinian negotiator Haidar Abdul Shafi has threatened to withdraw from the talks if Israel did not abide by Resolution 799. Sharif Zaid has also said that the expulsion decision "adversely affects the Middle East peace process and disrupts efforts being made to bring about a just and comprehensive peace to the region." But Palestinian analysts said that it was unlikely that Israel would accept Resolution 799, which would set a precedent whereby the Jewish state would be obliged to abide by all other resolutions concerning the Palestinian issue.

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Iraq willing to reveal suppliers in arms development, U.N. says

MANAMA (Agencies) — Iraq has finally agreed to discuss the key question of the suppliers of its big arms programmes, a U.N. weapons inspector said Friday. Baghdad's refusal till now to say who supplied what for its programmes has been a major obstacle to the lifting of U.N. sanctions, including the ban on unlimited exports of Iraqi oil. It had already expressed a willingness in December to talk about the suppliers for its nuclear programme but U.N. inspector Nikita Smidovitch said the Iraqis told him this would now apply to chemical, biological and ballistic weapons. "They indicated their willingness to discuss the issue," Mr. Smidovitch told reporters after his return from a five-day visit to Iraq at the head of a U.N. weapons team. "It's a change of attitude, because in their previous position they were very firm that they would not provide the lists (of suppliers)." "Now I would say they indicated at least some kind of willingness to discuss the issue. It doesn't mean that they will provide the information but they at least say we can discuss it."

Mr. Smidovitch said the Iraqis have yet to accept Resolution 715 and others which cover long-term monitoring to ensure it does not develop a nuclear bomb or revive its chemical, biological or long-range missile programmes. But the Iraqi attitude is different now from in December in the last weeks of the Bush administration. On Dec. 14, at the end of the last full U.N. inspection visit, inspector Johan Santesson voiced extreme dissatisfaction with Iraq's answers. He was quoted in a U.N. memorandum as saying Iraqi General Amer Rashid told him he would "break the backs" of any Iraqi who gave anything more than technical answers to U.N. queries. Mr. Smidovitch said Gen. Amer told him during his visit that he had been misquoted. And Mr. Smidovitch said before leaving Baghdad that the weapons inspections were back on track despite Iraq's failure so far to provide details of its arms suppliers (see page 2). Iraq had banned U.N. flights earlier this month but reversed its position when Bill Clinton became U.S. president, declaring

also a ceasefire in the southern and northern Iraq "no fly" zones decreed by Western allies confronting Baghdad. The ostensible purpose of Mr. Smidovitch's visit was to begin a programme of monitoring an Iraqi missile centre 20 kilometres north of Baghdad. Mr. Smidovitch said Iraq, which in the past has shown a talent for extending the range of imported systems, was developing a new generation of home-grown missiles with a range of less than 150 kilometres. This is permitted under Gulf war ceasefire terms but the United Nations wants to establish a long-term presence to make sure Iraq does not convert this into long-range missiles — the kinds that threatened neighbouring countries during the war. "The new missile programme of Iraq, after the war, is just taking shape," said Mr. Smidovitch, who is Russian. He left behind two Russian and two U.S. inspectors to monitor the facility. He told reporters here the name of the base was not Ben Ali Haythem, as some reports have. He refused to give the correct name.



A Palestinian evictee leads a donkey loaded with empty gas cylinders to the nearest Lebanese village (AFP photo)

Donors pledge \$380m to help Jordan's balance of payment

By P.V. Vivekanand
with agency dispatches

AMMAN — Donor countries have pledged \$380 million in aid to Jordan in a move seen not only as a reaffirmation of international understanding of Jordan's efforts to improve its economy but also as appreciation of the Kingdom's commitment to democracy and its positive contribution to the Middle East peace process. A statement issued in Paris by the World Bank, which organised a two-day meeting between Jordan and 24 donor countries and international agencies, said the gathering had promised \$380 million to the Kingdom to help it close a gap in its balance of payments in 1993. The statement, reported by news agencies, did not provide any split-up of the amount pledged or whether it included assistance to development projects or export credits. Finance Minister Basel Jarrah, Planning Minister Ziad Farah, Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) Deputy Governor Michel Marto and several other senior officials represented Jordan in the day meeting which began Thursday.

Addressing a press conference in Paris, Mr. Fariz described the outcome of the meeting as "an appreciation of our role in the Middle East at large ... of our role in the peace process." Furthermore, the donors were also expressing their support for the democratisation process under way in Jordan in line with their efforts to link assistance more closely to democracy and respect for human rights as well as sound economic policies, he said. "Of all governments in the region, Jordan has a track record — of those governments in the process of democratising their countries — of having a very strong economic team," an international official who attended the meeting was quoted as saying by Reuters. The official was also quoted as saying that Jordan was seen as a special case by the West because of the Kingdom's special role in the Arab-Israeli peace talks and that Jordan had also not been "penalised" for what was perceived as its support for Iraq during the Gulf crisis. The cut-off in Arab assistance to Jordan in the wake of the Gulf crisis, according to the official, was "perhaps ... a salutary shock for

Jordan. There was a recognition that they could rely continuously on support from the outside at that level." Ram Kumar Chopra, head of the World Bank's Middle East and North Africa Department who chaired the Paris meeting, said that there was unanimous agreement among participants that Jordan was implementing the right kind of economic and structural adjustment policies. Mr. Chopra also noted that Jordan continued to receive aid from non-Arab donors and the World Bank itself throughout the Gulf crisis. He said the Paris pledges completed Jordan's funding requirements for 1993. The Kingdom is expected to seek a similar amount for 1994. Mr. Chopra did not give details of the pledges made by donors, but indicated that Germany, the United States and the Arab Monetary Fund as well as the European Community would make substantial contributions. Diplomats in Amman said earlier that part of the assistance could come in export credits and financing for social projects. Such aid would allow Jordan to use foreign exchange available with the Kingdom to adjust the balance of payments, they noted. The promised \$380 million came over and above the JD 289 million (\$419 million) in foreign loans and JD 150 million (\$216 million) in

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5 Israeli soldiers wounded in clashes

MARIJAYOUN, Lebanon (Agencies) — Israeli troops and allied militiamen clashed with Lebanese resistance for a second straight day in South Lebanon Friday. Security sources said five Israeli soldiers and a Lebanese villager were wounded. Mortars, machine-guns and helicopter gunships were used in the fighting that erupted at 2:45 p.m. (1245 GMT), pitting Israeli troops and South Lebanon Army (SLA) militiamen against fighters of Hizbollah, the sources said. They said the Israelis called in two Cobra attack helicopters to strafe the woods between the southern market town of Nabatiyeh and the village of Arabaslim during the fighting. The strafed area, a Hizbollah stronghold, also was pounded by artillery and tank fire. The sources said Lebanese villager Ahmad Farhat, 60, of Arabaslim, was wounded in the shelling. All five Israelis were wounded near the village of Sojoud and Deir Al Gozlan inside a "security zone" Israel occupies in South Lebanon, the sources said. They said one seriously wounded soldier was evacuated by helicopter to Ramban hospital in the northern port city of Haifa. The minor wounds of the rest were treated at Marjayoun hospital. Marjayoun is the provincial capital of the zone which Israel carved out in 1985. It covers 1,100 square kilometres from the Mediterranean coast 80 kilometres inland to the foothills of Mount Hermon.

Arafat, Yael Dayan meet in Tunis

TUNIS (Agencies) — Yael Dayan, an Israeli parliament member and daughter of the late Israeli defence minister Moshe Dayan, held talks Friday with Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat. Both Mr. Arafat and Ms. Dayan declined to comment following the meeting, which was held at PLO Ambassador Hakam Balaw's residence. They said they would hold a joint press conference later. Mr. Arafat flew in from Libya for the meeting. He was whisked to the meeting from his Tunis headquarters accompanied by senior PLO members and Palestinians from the Israeli-occupied territories. Earlier, Ms. Dayan had separate meetings with PLO Executive Committee member Mahmoud Abbas, Ambassador Balaawi, who is a member of the Fateh Central Committee, and Faisal Hussein, consultant for the Palestinian team to the Arab-Israeli peace negotiations.

Ms. Dayan, 51, was the second Israeli to arrive in Tunis since the Knesset lifted a seven-year ban on contacts with PLO officials. She flew in from Paris Thursday, accompanied by several Israeli journalists who were making their first visit to Tunisia. Before the meeting with Mr. Arafat, Ms. Dayan, known for her activity in the left wing of Israel's Labour Party, toured Tunis' old city, visited a Jewish synagogue and met with Tunisian Jewish leaders. In an interview with Israel Radio ear-

lier Friday, Ms. Dayan rejected what she called "paranoia" in the Jewish state over her expected meeting with Mr. Arafat. The radio quoted Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin as saying her trip was "a disgrace to the Labour Party" to which they both belong. Israel army radio said Tzahi Hanegbi, a member of the main opposition hardline Likud Party, called for Ms. Dayan to lose her seat on the parliament's foreign affairs and defence committee. "I'm not occupied with any negotiations. I am hearing more than I am heard ... why all this paranoia? Why not sit and talk and listen and discuss practical things," Ms. Dayan told the radio. She told the radio she had been

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Croats face dam catastrophe

PERUCA DAM, Croatia (AP) — Water sprouted from the base of a vital hydroelectric dam Friday after Serb forces fleeing a Croatian offensive detonated mines in the structure. The Croatian presidency appealing for calm but said experts at the site believed there was a "realistic danger" that water pressure could cause the dam to cave in further. Croats captured the strategic dam in southern Croatia late Thursday after rebel Serbs had forced about 80 U.N. peacekeepers to abandon their posts. The dam, deep in territory seized by Serbs in Croatia's 1991 civil war, is the Croat's most important gain since they launched an offensive a week ago. Other military victories include recapturing a key airport and

bridge linking northern and southern Croatia. The Croatian offensive has prompted the United Nations to threaten the withdrawal of thousands of peacekeepers preserving an uneasy year-old truce, a move that could unleash all-out war across a wide swath of the Balkans. Two of the craters apparently left by retreating Serbs yawned in the road atop the Peruca Dam, a 60-metre-high structure running about 300 metres across the Cetina River north of the Adriatic port of Split. A walkway across one overspill had been blasted away, and an adjacent control tower appeared heavily shelled. A third crater was in the 20-metre thick structure, but there was no water leaking there. In-

stead, water sprouted as if from a natural spring from the dam's base. The Serbs were rumoured to have laced the dam with as many as 10,000 mines. The dam has not produced power for months, since taking heavy damage early in the Croatia's civil war. But water keeps thundering through its overspills and at least one open sluice gate for power stations downstream. Croatian authorities could not immediately estimate the threat to thousands of people and fertile farmland below the dam. Some Croatian villages are immediately downstream, but many have been deserted since the war. The nearest town, some 15 kilometres downstream, is Sinj, with a population of 60,000.

U.N. weapon inspections back on track in Iraq

BAGHDAD (R) — U.N. weapons inspections are back on track following Iraq's latest stand-off with the Security Council but the Iraqi government still have more to do, a U.N. missile expert said Friday.

Nikita Smidovitch, leaving Baghdad for Bahrain, said the U.N. was still waiting for Iraq to provide details of its arms suppliers and further documentary evidence on its weapons programmes and to accept provisions for long-term monitoring.

State media meanwhile reported that President Saddam Hussein had held his seventh meeting in five days with his officer corps Friday. There has been no official explanation of the meetings, which have mostly featured air force and air defence officers.

Mr. Smidovitch, one of the leaders of the first U.N. inspections of the Clinton presidency, said Iraq was once again cooperating after banning all United Nations flights. "I think that we have reestablished the inspection process and have started what was supposed to be continuing over those days," he told reporters.

Mr. Smidovitch, a Russian, said his team had begun a programme of monitoring at an Iraqi missile centre north of Baghdad. "By that we hope to achieve at least the interim monitoring of the facility which we estimate to be the prime missile research and development factory in Iraq at this moment."

The Security Council's Gulf war ceasefire terms, spelt out in Resolution 687, order the elimination of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction — including all missiles with a range of more than 150 kilometres.

Iraq has accepted the ceasefire resolution but is resisting Resolution 715 and others covering checks to ensure it does not de-

velop a nuclear bomb or revive its chemical, biological or longer-range missile programmes.

Mr. Smidovitch said Iraq, which in the past has shown a talent for extending the range of imported missile systems, was developing a new generation of permitted home-grown missiles with a range of less than 150 kilometres.

"The new missile programme of Iraq, after the war, is just taking shape," he said.

Under Resolution 715, which Iraq rejects as infringing its sovereignty, it must notify the U.N. of any programme to build missiles with a range of more than 50 kilometres.

Mr. Smidovitch said that it was difficult to keep a check on this. "In other areas it's a zero solution. Just ban chemical, biological and nuclear weapons. With missiles, sometimes it's very difficult to judge."

He left behind four inspectors to monitor developments at the centre, which he declined to identify.

Iraq, its economy in a shambles, is keen to shake off the U.N. trade blockade imposed after its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

After four days of U.S.-led air and missile strikes in the final days of the Bush administration, it declared a goodwill ceasefire for President Bill Clinton's Jan. 20 inauguration and called for dialogue.

But the United States, Britain and France, which launched the attacks on Jan. 13 after the Security Council accused Iraq of flouting its resolutions, are insisting on full compliance with all Gulf crisis resolutions.

"Clearly without acknowledging (Resolution 715) there will be no lifting of sanctions," Mr. Smidovitch said.

Apart from long-term monitor-

ing the U.N. special commission enforcing the resolutions has two main demands — lists of foreign suppliers and documents backing up Iraq's verbal submissions on what has happened to its banned weapons.

Nuclear expert Maurizio Zifferero, who remained in Baghdad, said late Thursday that Iraq was cooperating with his mission but he too is working on long-term, monitoring and pressing for names of foreign suppliers.

Mr. Smidovitch said Iraq had not provided such names. "Up to now they refuse to provide information on suppliers in all areas, across the board."

Iraq says it is meeting its obligations under the ceasefire resolution.

Iraq officials, in private, express frustration with the inspections saying that whatever details they provide the inspectors always come back demanding more.

Mr. Smidovitch said part of the problem was that in the past Iraq had deliberately tried to mislead the commission.

"Unfortunately Iraq ... was actively misleading the commission. A campaign of disinformation by their own admission. That undermined the trust," he said.

President Saddam had had seven highly publicised meetings in five days with military officers, particularly from the air force.

The reason for the meetings, whether morale boosting or operational planning, was not immediately clear.

State television's main evening news Thursday, once again featured the Iraqi president at the head of two long tables flanked by dozens of blue-uniformed junior air force officers.

Both the television and the ruling Baath Party newspaper, Al Thawra, the only newspaper published Friday, reported the meeting without comment.



Palestinian evacuees display an Israeli signboard they found near their tent camp in South Lebanon. The signboard says: "Danger mines" (AFP photo)

U.S. still opposes U.N. debate on Palestinian expellee crisis

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — The United States still opposes holding another U.N. Security Council debate on the fate of some 400 Palestinians expelled by Israel, the State Department said Thursday.

Spokesman Richard Boucher said Washington wanted to give diplomacy more time to solve the problem, even after Israel's high court ruled that the expulsions were legal.

"We're in the process of consulting with the Israeli government on next steps, which can resolve the issue. We're also contacting other interested parties at the U.N. and in the region, and that's about all we have to say for the moment," Mr. Boucher said.

Diplomats said the U.S. ambassador to Tel Aviv, William Harrop, met Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin Thursday. They did not know what emerged from the meeting.

Mr. Boucher declined to react to the court decision which upheld the Dec. 17 expulsions of 415 Palestinians from the occupied territories on the grounds that they were suspected of belonging to radical Islamic fundamentalist groups responsible for killing Israeli soldiers.

"I don't set an agenda for foreign supreme court. In any way, I don't think it's for me to comment on their decision," said Mr. Boucher.

"We want to pursue this diplomatically. Those diplomatic efforts have to be given a chance to succeed. We don't think it's time for a debate in the Security Council on sanctions," Mr. Boucher said.

Arab states are preparing a U.N. resolution imposing limited sanctions on Israel for its refusal to return the evacuees. A few were returned to Israel last weekend but 396 are still stranded on an exposed hillside in South Lebanon, between Israeli and Lebanese lines.

The United States has not used its veto in the Security Council for almost three years and would prefer not to use it now. But if pushed to the wall, most analysts believe it would veto a sanctions resolution against Israel.

Mr. Boucher said Thursday a satisfactory resolution, would be "in accordance with U.N. Security Council resolutions as well as the needs of the parties." The Security Council has called on Israel to allow the evacuees to return. The United States voted

in favour of that resolution. "We're in the process of consulting with the Israeli government on next steps which can resolve the issue," the spokesman told questioners. "We're also contacting other interested parties at the U.N. and in the region."

Mr. Boucher noted there were references to the evacuees during an informal Security Council meeting Jan 27 in the context of discussion of the regular semi-annual renewal of the mandate for the U.N. Truce Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

Responding to questions, the spokesman reiterated the U.S. view that bilateral peace talks between Israel and its Arab neighbours — Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan, as well as with the Palestinians — are important to the region and to the parties that are involved in them. The United States has told all the parties publicly and privately that the peace talks should continue, he said.

American officials have been discussing a resumption of the peace talks with the parties, Mr. Boucher said, but have not yet suggested specific dates for the next round of bilateral talks.

Jordanians, Palestinians urge action

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"There might still be a way out for the Israelis to repatriate the evacuees before the next round of talks without directly abiding by the U.N. resolution," a Palestinian analyst close to the PLO told the Jordan Times. He noted that the next round of bilateral talks will probably take place after March, giving the Jewish state enough time for a "face-saving" solution to the crisis.

A PLO spokesman was quoted Thursday by the Palestinian News Agency Wafa as saying that the organisation was conducting intense contacts to ensure Israel's compliance with Resolution 799 by "taking the necessary measures committing Israel to comply."

The Security Council is expected to debate the expulsion issue on Monday. While Israel expects the U.S. to veto any resolution imposing sanctions against the Jewish state, reports from Washington indicate discomfort with Israel's decision. Washington has urged "diplomatic efforts" to end the expulsion crisis, but the U.S. has fallen short of threatening to veto such a resolution which has gathered support from all other members of the council.

Arab countries have urged the Security Council to apply an even-handed approach in implementing its resolutions at a time when the West used force against Iraq to enforce U.N. resolutions.

In statement to Petra, Jordan's U.N. Ambassador Adnan Abu Odeh said the international body should apply an even-handed approach in implementing its resolutions.

"Selectivity in applying the resolu-

tions has become a problem many are discussing, including the U.N. secretary-general," Mr. Abu Odeh said. "While we see some resolutions being implemented by force in one country, we see other resolutions being resisted without disturbance in the drawers of the U.N."

The speaker of the Palestine National Council (PNC), Sheikh Abdul Hamid Al Sayeh, told Petra that unless the Security Council forces Israel to abide by Resolution 799, the "countries and peoples of the region and the world would lose confidence in the Security Council."

In a report submitted to the Security Council last week, U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali urged the international body to take further measures to ensure Israel's compliance with Resolution 799.

Mr. Abu Odeh described the Israeli court decision as a "political decision, and not based on justice."

He said the decision "contradicted all those who had illusions and held hopes in the justice of Israeli courts towards the Palestinians."

Mr. Abu Odeh stressed that Security Council resolutions were not issued to suit single countries, but were based on the principles of the U.N.

Hamas spokesman Mohammad Nazzari told the Jordan Times that the Israeli court decision on the "legality" of the expulsions was expected.

"We were not betting on a positive Israeli court decision," Mr. Nazzari said. "And we would not accept any sort of compromise which would legitimise expulsions of Palestinians from their homes."

In another statement faxed to the

Jordan Times, Hamas called on the Security Council to "say its word with honesty and clarity."

"Any nearly resolution from the Security Council will mean submission to the racist entity and a collapse of all calls for democracy and human rights," Hamas stated. The movement also insisted that Israel repatriate all the expelled immediately.

Palestinian spokeswoman at the Middle East peace talks Hanan Ashrawi said she was not surprised by the court verdict that "Palestinians never expected to get justice from the Israeli judicial system," she said.

Upper House Speaker Ahmad Laroui was quoted by Petra as saying that Israeli court decision was in line with the "illegal Zionist policies based on usurping Palestinian Arab land and emptying it of its people through killings and evictions."

Mr. Laroui added that was now up to the international community and world organisations to force its will on Israel.

Lower House Speaker Abdul Latif Arabiyat, describing the Israeli court decision as a "new judicial crime," also said that the Jewish state's measure was an expression of the "truth of the occupation and its objectives."

PNC member Ibrahim Abu Ayyash called on the international community to take "serious measures" against Israel.

"Which party decides legality?" asked Mr. Abu Ayyash in an interview with the Jordan Times. "The Israeli court or international legality? It is high time for the world to act against Israel if it wants its resolutions implemented."

Mr. Abu Ayyash said the Security Council should at least impose a deadline for Israel to abide by resolution 799.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Aziz says France lost out on ties

PARIS (R) — Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz said in an interview published Friday that Paris had greatly lost out by siding with the United States during and since the Gulf war. "Ask any businessman or diplomat. France had a lot of advantages in Iraq before... It was an important actor in the region," he told the French newspaper Le Figaro. "Has France gained equal advantages by taking a hostile position towards us since then? My answer is that it has suffered a great loss both politically and economically," he said. France was a major supplier of military equipment and in debt to Paris for unpaid purchases in the years immediately preceding the invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. A U.N. trade embargo has been in force against Iraq since the invasion, reversed by U.S.-led forces in the 1991 Gulf war. Mr. Aziz said Western policies intended to weaken Iraq had "led to a grave regional imbalance." "The Gulf is no safer today than it was before 1990. Iraq is an important regional power and to weaken it only complicates things." Asked about relations with the new U.S. administration, he said: "The ball is in the American camp... we are ready to talk (to the U.S.) in a professional and objective fashion."

Turkey rejects Iraq's call on new dam

ANKARA (AP) — Turkey said Thursday that it will go ahead with plans to build a fourth dam on the Euphrates River despite Iraqi opposition. Access to water is of vital concern in this parched region and Iraq complained earlier this week that the construction of the Birecik dam near the border with Syria would decrease water flow beyond mutually decided levels. Iraq asked Turkey and Syria to attend a joint meeting to discuss the issue. Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Filiz Dincmen said Turkey would cover the needs of its neighbours in accordance with the international norms but would also continue to use the crossborder rivers for its own needs and build the dam. The Birecik dam is to be completed at the end of 1998.

Belgium's Claes may meet Arafat in February

BRUSSELS (R) — Belgian Foreign Minister Willy Claes may hold talks with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat in Tunis next month, a ministry spokesman said Wednesday. Belgium takes over the rotating European Community (EC) presidency in July and a meeting with the Palestine Liberation Organisation chairman was in the context of Belgium's EC role, the spokesman told Reuters. The foreign minister is also scheduled to meet Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali during his visit to Tunisia from Feb. 6-8. Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres is due to arrive in Brussels Sunday and is scheduled to meet EC foreign ministers on Monday.

6 dead, 15 hurt in Cairo building collapse

CAIRO (R) — the death toll after a six-storey building collapsed in the Heliopolis district of Cairo rose to six and 15 were injured, Egyptian newspapers said Friday. Rescue teams worked overnight to rescue people from beneath the rubble of the building which crumbled Thursday. Security sources said seven people were believed still trapped. Many poor-quality and ill-constructed buildings have collapsed in Cairo since an earthquake hit Egypt last year, killing more than 550 people. Residents said an engineering team, which had checked the building after the earthquake, found it had been weakened and recommended it be evacuated.

Israeli soldiers may be tried for grenade incident

TEL AVIV (AP) — An Israeli soldier will be tried for attempting to disperse a television news team Thursday with a stun grenade, the army said. The Israeli television crew was interviewing residents of Hebron in the occupied West Bank on the results of the supreme court upholding Israel's expulsion of over 400 Palestinians when the stun bomb struck, causing panic. An investigation showed the soldier had tossed the grenade on his own initiative, an army statement said. It said the circumstances did not warrant the use of the grenade. No one was injured. Stun grenades are not lethal and are usually used for shock effect. The army statement said that a local army commander had asked the crew to move as it was blocking traffic on Hebron's main thoroughfare by attracting dozens of onlookers. It was when the crew did not move that the soldier tossed the grenade, it said. But the TV broadcast showed no more than a dozen onlookers and free-moving traffic. Israel TV reporter Amir Hai said he had coordinated the interviews with the local army commander.

Tribe mediates to free hostage in Yemen

SANAA (AP) — A second major Yemeni tribe is leading mediation efforts for release of a German-born Canadian businessman held hostage by another, security sources said Friday. The sources, who spoke on condition they not be named, said the tribe of Beni Qous began moving over the past 24 hours for the release of the man identified as Mike Schmitz, about 45. Mr. Schmitz is an employee of Sterling Air Services, a shipping and freight company. His parents live in Edmonton, Alberta. Officials at his company reported late Thursday that they had been assured about Mr. Schmitz being in good condition. They have refused to disclose further details. Diplomats said Roy Phillips, another expatriate employed as manager of the Yemeni-Kuwait Shipping Line, was leading negotiations on behalf of Mr. Sterling for the release of Mr. Schmitz. Mr. Schmitz was seized Sunday en route to Sanaa from Aden by members of the Al Hadar tribe in Dhamar province, about 100 kilometres south of the capital. The tribe inhabits a plain among the mountains on the province. The tribe of Beni Qous, neighbouring the Al Hadar, are known to be influential. It remained unclear whether the kidnapping was motivated by a wish to use Mr. Schmitz as a bargaining chip against demands the Al Hadar are making on the government such as return of confiscated land or release of a tribesman from jail. Last year, Yemenis seized seven people including George Slaughter, an American executive of the Hunt Oil Co., as they were being sought to an oil field helicopter base. The kidnappers then sought the release of an imprisoned man. The authorities succeeded in freeing the people after about eight hours, but details of how this was accomplished were never revealed.

Freed Siad Barre loyalists pledge Somalia's unity

MOGADISHU (AP) — General Mohammad Farrah Aidede, one of Somalia's main warlords, Friday announced the release of nearly 400 soldiers of the country's former dictator. The former prisoners said they were not mistreated and pledged to work for Somali unity.

In a brief ceremony at the headquarters of the once-feared criminal investigation division of the former national police, Gen. Aidede said the release of 387 soldiers was a gesture of national reconciliation.

"We believe they (the prisoners) will carry this message to their families and to the nation and the response will be positive," he added.

The soldiers were captured last April when dictator Mohammad Siad Barre, who had been chased from Mogadishu 14 months earlier, tried to recapture the capital.

His forces, under the command of a son-in-law, Gen. Mohammad Said Hirsi, known as Gen. Morgan, advanced to within 45 kilometres of Mogadishu before being pushed back.

Gen. Aidede's forces chased the Siad Barre loyalists all the way west to the Kenya border in less than a week.

Mr. Siad Barre crossed into Kenya and was granted temporary asylum before going into exile in Nigeria. Gen. Morgan has continued to fight in central and southern Somalia ever since.

Twenty-two captured officers were present at the ceremony and all appeared to be in good health despite their 10 months of captiv-

ity. "We were absolutely not mistreated at all," said Colonel Hassan Musa Farrah, 36.

Asked what he would do upon his release, he said: "I think my role will be to help stabilise Somalia. We are all Somalis, all brothers."

Gen. Aidede reiterated his pledge to abide by a ceasefire agreed to among the shattered country's 14 warring factions at a Jan. 15 meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

He accused Gen. Morgan of continuing violations, despite the fact that Gen. Morgan's main force was attacked last week by American and Belgian forces when it refused to halt an advance towards the southern port of Kismayu. U.S. Marine helicopters and Belgian armoured vehicles destroyed much of Gen. Morgan's column and scattered the rest.

U.S. special envoy Robert Oakley called the release "a good humanitarian act."

Mr. Oakley said he and the International Committee of the Red Cross had each been urging Gen. Aidede to release the officers and enlisted men.

The foreign forces are in the country to help secure food and aid distribution to Somalis left starving by civil war and drought which has killed 350,000.

At the end of the ceremony, Gen. Aidede strode to where the 22 captive officers were sitting and repeated his message of reconciliation.

"We are going to get a new

Somalia," he told the men, "a Somalia where every one of us can go everywhere in the country and can live wherever we want to live."

"We want all the Somali people to live in unity, justice and friendship and forget what has happened. This is the best solution."

At the close of Gen. Aidede's talk to them, the former captives raised their right arms and joined him in a shout of "Long live Somalia."

Marine wounds teenager

A U.S. Marine shot and wounded a Somali teenager Wednesday night at a checkpoint in Mogadishu after the teenager shot a pistol from a Marine and levelled it at the trooper, a military spokesman said.

Army Major Ken Roberts said the teenager grabbed the pistol from a Marine riding in the back of a vehicle and pointed it at the Marine.

"He was told to put it down," said Maj. Roberts. "He refused."

Maj. Roberts said the teenager was shot in the leg and was taken to an army hospital at Mogadishu airport.

In another incident Wednesday night, an American soldier driving his vehicle near the airport was hit in the face with a brick and required 15 stitches, Maj. Roberts said.

U.S. servicemen have been the target of Somalia, mainly young people, who taunt them and try to steal from them.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 73111-10

PROGRAMME TWO
18:00 Les Aventures de L'espace
18:30 Reportage
19:00 News in French
19:15 Penelope
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 America's Funniest Home Videos
21:00 Prospectives
21:30 Science Workshop
22:00 News in English
22:30 Feature film: "City in the Wild"

PRAYER TIMES

05:07 Fajr
06:27 (Sunrise) Dhuha
11:47 Asr
14:45 Maghrib
17:11 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swedieh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 637785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590.
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 674400.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terresanta Church Tel. 622366

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541.
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 626543.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 715311.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 715261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 717751.
Assiout International Church Tel. 685336.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811285.
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Tel. 654932.
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
It will be partly cloudy and there will be a chance for scattered showers, while winds will be westerly moderate. In Aqaba, it will be partly cloudy with northerly moderate winds and calm seas.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman 4/12
Aqaba 5/20
Dhahran 7/14
Jordan Valley 7/18

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Farouq Noor 766680
Dr. Salah Al 'Usoud 649028
Dr. Bajaj Bader 849062
Dr. Hisham Kanaan 790236
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdous pharmacy 778336
Al Asma pharmacy 637055
Nasrallah pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 626730
Yacoub pharmacy 649455
Shmiciani pharmacy 637660
Najib pharmacy 847632

ERBID:
Dr. Walid Ibrahim 244412
Al Ouds Pharmacy (—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Zaid Ja'afan (—)
Khalid pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence immediate 630341
Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 1999
Rescue Police 92, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 641176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 707111
Complaints 707111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 610230
Central Amman Telephone 63101
Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 641101

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/352
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn 642816
Al-Khalid Maternity, J. Amn 642816
Jabal Amman Maternity 642862
Mallat, J. Amman 636140
Palestine Shmiciani 661714
Shmiciani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Muhsin Hospital 6672719
The Islamic, Abdali 66012727
Al-Ani, Abdali 6641646
Italian, Al-Muhajres 771013
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 7751126
Arny, Marka 891611/15

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (05)3202-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

05:30 Jakarta, Singapore (RJ)
06:15 Cairo, Aqaba (RJ)
06:15 Dhahran (RJ)
06:15 New Delhi (RJ)
06:40 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
06:40 Beirut (RJ)
06:40 Colombo (RJ)
06:45 Cairo (RJ)
07:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
07:55 London, Berlin (RJ)
08:15 Frankfurt, Vienna (RJ)
08:30 Bangkok (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

07:05 Larnaca (CY)
08:15 Beirut (SY)
08:30 Sams (TY)
08:40 Dubai (EM)
23:25 Damascus, Paris (AF)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

11:30 Sams (TY)
17:55 Paris, Damascus (AF)
19:00 Dubai, Damascus, (EM)
19:25 Rome, Beirut (AZ)
06:15 Beirut (RJ)
11:30 Paris, Brussels (RJ)
11:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:50 Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
12:10 London (RJ)
12:45 Cairo (RJ)
20:00 Larnaca (RJ)
20:30 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
20:30 Jeddah (RJ)
21:30 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:15 Beirut (RJ)
11:30 Paris, Brussels (RJ)
11:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:50 Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
12:10 London (RJ)
12:45 Cairo (RJ)
20:00 Larnaca (RJ)
20:30 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
20:30 Jeddah (RJ)
21:30 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)

MARKET PRICES

Upperflower price in ffs per kg.
Apples 700/300

Ministry works towards greening Jordan



Their Royal Highnesses Prince Hamzah and Prince Hashim plant a pine tree Thursday in the Yajouz forest, while Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor and Their Royal Highnesses Princess Iman and Princess Raya look on (Photo by George Crystal)

AMMAN (J.T.) — During a tree-planting ceremony attended by their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor, Minister of Agriculture Fayez Khasawneh said the ministry was maintaining close coordination with the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) towards greening the country.

In a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Mr. Khasawneh said both institutions, in cooperation with the private sector, aim to plant trees on 300,000 dunams of land.

The minister said contacts are underway with 100 Jordanians institutions to participate in the greening process.

Of these, 50 have responded

favourably and 10 have actively begun implementing the project the minister said.

RSCN President Anis Muasher said the society has planted 10,000 trees in the Yajouz forest, site of Thursday's ceremony.

Over the past eight years, the society has been planting trees in various areas and has created seven forests in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture.

Their Majesties together with Their Royal Highnesses Prince Hamzah, and Prince Hashem and Princess Iman and Princess Raya took part in the tree-planting ceremony attended by officials, their families and a large crowd of citizens.



Marcello Mastriani and Sandrine Bonnaire in 'Verso Sera' (Towards Evening), a Francesca Archibugi film (Photo by ANICA)

Italian film week begins

By Maha Addasi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Italian embassy, in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture, Saturday will begin the Italian film week, said Giovanni Benenati of the embassy's cultural department.

The Italian film week is part of a Jordanian-Italian cultural agreement signed in 1975 and is one of three agreements between Italy and Jordan, Mr. Benenati said.

"Jordan and Italy have a technical assistance as well as a tourism agreement that have been on-going for several years and reflect the strong bilateral ties between the two countries," Mr. Benenati said.

He added that Italians were the first tourists to return to Jordan

after the Gulf war, and in 1992, 18,000 Italian tourists visited the Kingdom.

"This high number of tourists from Italy came after the yearly conference for Italian travel agents held in Jordan and attended by over 1000 travel agents in April of 1992," Mr. Benenati said, adding that thousands of Jordanians also travel to Italy to study at universities.

According to Mr. Benenati, many of those who studied in Italy are regular attendants of the Italian film weeks.

Mr. Benenati said the movies selected for this year include six movies by young directors who have worked with world-renowned names such as Federico Fellini, Luigi Comencini and Daniele Danza.

Jordan Times
Tel: 667171

Salt holds municipal elections

SALT (J.T.) — On Saturday the people of Salt will elect new members to the 11 seat Municipal Council from 23 candidates representing various political trends and blocs.

A total of 15,147 Salt residents are eligible to vote in these elections, held every four years.

Mohammad Faour, assistant to the Balqa governor, said the voting will take place at nine centres in local schools.

There will be separate facilities for men and women voters, he added.

In a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Friday, Mr. Faour said one of the schools has been assigned for gathering the ballots and counting the votes at the end of the day.

He said the election and the counting of votes will take place under the supervision of a four-member committee appointed by the governor.

According to municipality sources, the candidates have been grouped into two main blocs: the Reconstruction bloc and the Justice For All bloc.

The Reconstruction bloc is led by attorney Abdul Fattah Ensour who was quoted as saying his bloc seeks the reconstruction of the city, stimulating the role of youth and cultural centres, and ensuring better municipal services to the local population.

The Justice For All bloc is led by pharmacist Hashem Hiarri who said his bloc will direct its attention towards promoting the industrial sector in the city and means of reducing unemployment among the university graduates.

He also said more attention would be given to beautifying the city by planting more trees and keeping the roads clean.

According to municipality sources, Mr. Khalil Abul Ragheb is the only candidate running as an independent.

Israel may recognise PLO, Majali says



Abdul Salam Al Majali

AMMAN — Israel might recognise the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), and a dialogue between the PLO on the one hand and Israel and the U.S. on the other might develop in the near future, Abdul Salam Al Majali, head of Jordan's delegation to the Middle East peace talks has predicted.

Al Dustour Arabic daily Wednesday quoted Dr. Majali as saying in a lecture to the Jerash chapter of the Lions Club that he anticipates the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) will join the PLO.

He said the West's perception of the Palestine question has changed as a result of the peace process.

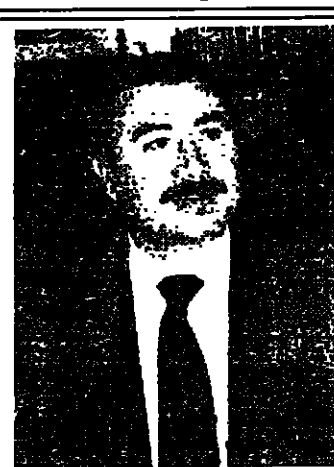
Before the 1991 Madrid

associate Palestinians with terrorism.

That same perspective also led the West to view Jordan as the alternative homeland for the Palestinians, Dr. Majali said.

He said the peace talks have succeeded in shaking that perspective through Israel's documented recognition of borders with Jordan and its recognition that the West Bank is occupied Arab territory.

Commenting on reports that some Arab parties might reach separate agreements with Israel, Dr. Majali said that Jordan believes in a comprehensive solution, and therefore will not negotiate or conclude any individual agreement with Israel at any time.



Ali Abul Ragheb

Sofar receives power

By a Jordan Times
Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Ali Abul Ragheb said within a month work will begin in Sofar and other settlements in the Jordan Valley, as part of the JD 25 million electrification programme announced by the government Dec. 27.

On a visit to the Valley Thursday with the ministers of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the

Environment, Water and Irrigation, and Youth, the ministers surveyed a number of regions where the master plan for the social and economic development

of the Jordan Valley will be implemented.

Sofar is one of 226 villages and settlements to be supplied with electricity during 1993. The estimated cost of this programme is JD 11.5 million.

Another 200 villages will be supplied with electricity in 1994, ensuring 100 per cent electrical power to all areas of Jordan, Mr. Abul Ragheb said.

At the town of Maisara, the ministers inaugurated a power station that will service 260 households and a transformer station at Nahda benefiting 300 subscribers.

The ministers were briefed by Jordan Valley Secretary General Abdul Aziz Wishah on efforts to promote services, particularly housing, in the Jordan Valley.

The ministers also inspected the services in Krameh and Dirar.

JPMC, Pakistan study joint-venture

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordan Phosphate Mines Company (JPMC) and the Pakistani Fertilisers Company (PFCC) have agreed to conduct a feasibility study on the establishment of a plant in Jordan to produce phosphoric acid, said Thabet Al Taher JPMC director general.

Mr. Taher, who recently returned from a visit to Pakistan, said the proposed plant would

produce up to 20,000 tonnes of phosphoric acid.

Plans to set up a factory in Pakistan to produce 425,000 tonnes of ammonium phosphate fertilisers are also in the works, according to Mr. Taher.

The Pakistani concern will be supplied with phosphoric acid from the proposed Jordanian plant, he added.

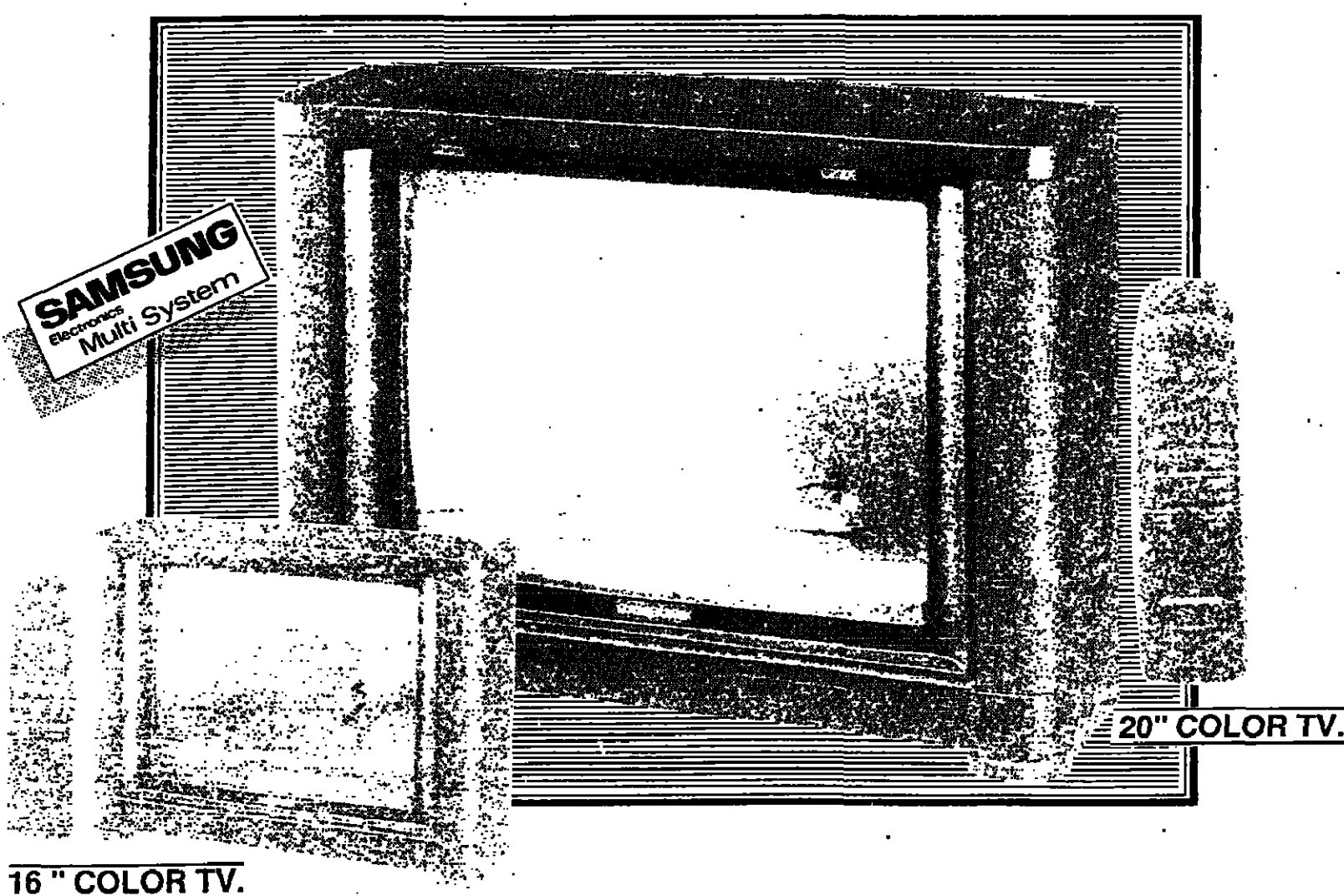
According to Mr. Taher JPMC

also plans to establish a plant to produce 300,000 tonnes of ammonia annually in Jordan and another in Pakistan that will produce 325,000 tonnes of fertilisers, should feasibility studies on these projects prove positive.

The proposed phosphoric acid plant would annually require 700,000 tonnes of raw phosphate mined in Jordan, Mr. Taher said.

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Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation.
Established 1972
مؤسسة الصحافة الأردنية

Chairman of the Board of Directors:

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The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the
Jordan Times advertising department.

Confronting the bully

THE ISRAELI high court's decision to uphold the expulsion of Palestinians deals a heavy blow to all hopes of averting a real and new conflict in the region. The imposition of a more forceful U.N. Security Council action against Israel, or even the infliction of a fatal wound to the Arab-Israeli peace process, seems to be about the only logical consequence of the decision. Granted that the judgement rendered by the court requires a thorough legal interpretation before a lasting political sentence can be made. But it is clear already that the damage from the new Israeli action will have widespread implications on both the peace negotiations and their sponsors' credibility in the area. Optimists may see a bright spot in the court's verdict, in that it left the door open for individual appeals that may necessitate the temporary repatriation of each and every expellee wishing to fight legally for his case. Yet this window of opportunity — or opportunism — does not really address the central issue.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, his government and obviously "his" judges sitting on the bench of the high court are still treating the expulsion as if it is only a domestic problem that can be shuttled between the executive and judicial branches of government. The truth of the matter, however, is that the expulsion is a much bigger issue which is subject to international scrutiny and adjudication. It is common knowledge that human rights violations are subject to international jurisdiction and no state in these contemporary times can still call for non-interference in its "domestic" affairs when such rights are at stake. Furthermore, the Security Council, the highest organ of the international organisation, has already spoken on the expulsion order and rendered its decision on it in a manner that is not up for reconsideration by any Israeli domestic branch of government.

It is ironic that in spite of the clearly articulated judgement of the United Nations' main body on international peace and security, Washington is still calling for the pursuit of more diplomatic efforts before the imposition of sanctions against Israel can be entertained. The U.S., it has to be remembered, arbitrarily refused all such counsel when the Gulf conflict erupted in August of 1990. When these double standards in dealing with issues are going to end is something that only the new U.S. president, Mr. Bill Clinton, can answer. We will continue to pin high hopes on this man to act and reverse the hypocrisies of previous American administration until he actually fails to deliver on his campaign pledges of fairness and justice for all. But pinning hope on Clinton's sense of justice is not enough of course. The Arab World also has a duty to wake up from its slumber and take a walk around to feel its real weight in the new world order. At the helm of the U.N. there is an Arab, and he sounds eager to do something. Besides, right, justice and international legitimacy are on our side. That is why we should not hesitate for one minute in giving our cause what it requires. Should confronting the Israeli bully and its backers be the only solution, so be it.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

DESCRIBING THE Israeli higher court's verdict concerning the deportees as a farce, Al Ra'i Arabic daily said that the decision represents yet another defiance of the world community. The court verdict, which supported Mr. Rabin government's decision to deport the 415 Palestinians to southern Lebanon, should by no means serve as a motive for the U.N. Security Council to delay a debate on the matter and decide on forcing Israel to comply with the world community's rules, demanded the paper. Mr. Rabin has issued a statement urging the Security Council to refrain from issuing any hostile resolutions against Israel, claiming that this would end the peace process, added the daily. But, it said, the world community should be firm in the face of Israeli terrorism and its defiance of the international laws and principles, and should punish Israel for its crime against humanity. The Security Council should emphasise that the crime of deportation can by no means open the way for peace in the region and should force Israel to abide by the international rules, said the paper. The daily also urged the Arab states to make a determined and concerted diplomatic move in the United States and in Europe to win support for their stand and for the repatriation of the deported men. The paper also voiced appreciation of the French reaction to the court's decision, which condemned Israel's practices, and it expressed hope that France and European countries at large will now turn their attention to a meaningful action at the Security Council to implement all U.N. resolutions concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict.

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i daily urged the political parties in Jordan to assume serious responsibility towards contributing to the democratic process in Jordan. Now that the King has decided that the elections should not be delayed and must take place on time, the political parties ought to gear up to this challenge and try to reach out to the electorate and take active part in the coming elections, said Tareq Masarweh. Political parties can win the support of the people by declaring clear manifestos and programmes for their activities and their contribution towards enhancing democracy, called the writer. These programmes, he said, should provide solutions or partial solutions for the many problems plaguing the nation and should appeal to the public, he said.

Towards a real new world order

By Dr. Maan Abu Nowar

sick and dying.

This grave and dangerous inequality between nations is far more distinct and potent in the United Nations Charter. For while international customary law provided for the equality of nations before the law, the Charter provided for a privileged position for the permanent members of the Security Council, which gave them the right of veto as well as a certain privilege in the procedures for its revision.

To put it simply, if equality of nations before international law is to be a fundamental principle of the new world order, membership to the Security Council will have to be determined by criteria acceptable not only to the United States and her con-

addressed.

Furthermore, the western powers, Russia, China and the "Big Seven" seem to ignore the vast problems of the frustrated regional groups of nations in Latin America, Africa, the Arab Nation, the Muslim Nation and the nations of South East Asia. Within each group there are severe national and international economic, social, and political problems. If western Europe and the United States concentrate their efforts, as they seem to do now, on solving the problems of eastern Europe and neglect those of the rest of the world, the change towards a new world order will be a non-starter. Even in the issue of the global environment the effects of that neglect will be

colonial or quasi colonial control of non-Muslim, and mainly Christian powers. Between the two world wars, most Muslim communities saw economic and social development pass them by with meagre benefit for themselves.

After World War II, the majority of Muslim nations achieved their independence and established some 35 states of their own. One billion Muslims in Asia and Africa are now politically sovereign but economically dependent on handouts from few Arab and Muslim countries and the financial international oligarchy and their leviathan banks. Within the Muslim Nation, the vast majority of the Arab Nation lives in poverty and despair (Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Yemen, Sudan, Morocco, Tunisia, Somalia, Djibouti, Mauritania), few can make ends meet (Algeria, Bahrain) while Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Oman and Libya enjoy financial resources far exceeding their extravagant needs. Thus the gap between the Arab rich and poor widens the spirit of brotherhood in Islam and Arabism, considering the meagre handouts extended from the oil producing countries to Arabs and Muslims the world over. Compared to the vast and unneeded investment by the rich Arabs in the industrial growth of rich nations, the U.S. and western Europe, extremely needed aid from Arabs to Arabs and the reluctance of the rich to help the poor will cause anger and shame.

The new domination of the rich Arab states by the United States, and the indirect control over what they provide in aid to the poor Arab countries, as well as the continued enmity towards Iraq, even against Iraqi children, is extremely resented, indeed despised, by Arab intellectuals as well as by the Arab and Muslim majority.

All this, with the disturbing, indeed heartaching sadness, physical and mental torture and despair suffered by the Palestinian people during the last seventy years and particularly during

the last five of the intifada which has highlighted the sense of the grave injustice suffered by the whole Arab and Muslim nations, became the main cause for the emergence and the spread of extreme Muslim fundamentalism and Arab nationalism.

The Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, though sad and regrettable, was but one indication of what is waiting ahead in a new great Muslim and Arab awakening if the lack of peaceful and honourable settlement of the Palestinian question continues to humiliate Arabs and Muslims the world over. The neglect with which the international oligarchy has treated the Palestinian tragedy, particularly the massacres in Jerusalem's Aqsa Mosque and the Gaza Strip, as well as the tragedy of the four hundred Palestinians expelled from their homes, compared with all the speed, sense of urgency, determination, and size of action, with which they are treating the Gulf crisis, leaves very little for Arab and Muslim imagination.

Many millions of Arabs and Muslims wish for nothing less than the best relations between all the Muslim and Arab nations and the rest of the world, particularly the western democracies. They strongly yearn for a new world order of freedom, democracy, and human rights, which will allow them to achieve peace, justice, and progress in a caring world. It will soon be clear whether the international oligarchy can have it in their wisdom and their kind of humanity, which we hear and read much about but see little of, to give a real chance for a negotiated settlement of every conflict in the Middle East, to free the children of Iraq from the sadistic boycott against their food and medicine, to free the children of Palestine from the carnage inflicted upon them every day by Zionist and sadist killers. That or else, and the blind can see, there can be no chance for a new and real world order.

The writer is an historian and former minister of information. He contributed the above article to the Jordan Times.

"If equality of nations before international law is to be a fundamental principle of the new world order, membership to the Security Council will have to be determined by criteria acceptable not only to the United States and her constellation of four other permanent members, but also to the majority of nations."

stellation of four other permanent members, but also to the majority of nations. If economic power is to be considered, Japan and Germany have a just cause to demand membership in that council. If it is determined by the size of population, India must have her seat, for its population exceeds that of the total of the ex-USSR, U.S., U.K. and France twice over. If religious considerations can influence the planners, one billion Muslims deserve membership. If the principles of freedom, democracy, political pluralism and human rights are to be considered, nearly one third of the members of the General Assembly, including China, may lose their seats. To create an equitable, just and workable new world order, these considerations as well as many others must be

devastating.

One major problem can serve as an example of the challenges which will face the planners of the idea of a new world order: that of the Islamic World and Muslim extremism. In 1914 the prospects of the Muslim World were at the lowest ebb since the greatest crisis of Islam, when the Mongol hordes sacked Baghdad in 1258. Prophet Mohammad, the founder of the Arab and Islamic Nation, intended Muslims to have a state of their own in a tolerant and peaceful world. Yet, in 1914, there was not one Muslim country which was completely independent on the face of the earth. The Ottoman Empire was reduced to a "sick man" by international designs and indirect controls, while the remaining Muslim communities had fallen under the

Clinton's high profile on military ban tests resolve

By John King
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Bill Clinton is taking an uncharacteristic risk, staking early political capital on a commitment to end the military's ban on homosexuals. It is a delicate fight he has joined, with far more antagonists than allies.

His resolve may be admirable: He is taking a stand purely on principle, and on an issue that provides no cover for the squeamish.

But as his determination to abolish this 50-year-old ban becomes clear, the same question is heard over and over again in a city trying to size up its new leader: Why has Mr. Clinton decided to push this controversial issue so soon, and how much valuable political capital is he willing to spend in the effort?

"The president's had this commitment since the start of the campaign. He intends to fulfill that commitment," Mr. Clinton's spokesman George Stephanopoulos said Tuesday. And he acknowledged, "I suppose there's risk anytime you stand on principle."

Reversing the ban was indeed a campaign promise, but it was hardly characterised as a priority. "The economy, stupid" was his now-etched campaign compass, and even some of the president's closest political advisers believe he's veered at least a bit off course in his first week.

"He said he would do this...give him credit for doing it," said one political adviser, speaking on condition of anonymity. "He's the guy the press says is afraid of risks taking a risk...But he didn't say he'd do it first."

speaking privately, expressed concern that the nation's first glimpse of the new administration has centred on talk of raising taxes and reversing the military ban on gays.

"But you don't always get to pick the order of your fights and I think it is going to be a hot fire that burns fast," said the second adviser, also speaking only on condition of anonymity.

To gain leverage for the fight, Mr. Clinton aides are casting the fight in far broader terms than lifting the military's ban on gays — as a civil rights issue in the vein of allowing blacks and women in the military, or the right to vote for that matter.

Allies are stepping up to echo the theme.

There are important political forces in our society that continue to want to separate Americans and to define them by either race

or religion or preference," Massachusetts Sen. Edward M. Kennedy told NBC. "The real question, I think, under President Clinton is trying to bring the nation together and to try and deal with the issues of intolerance in our society."

How Mr. Clinton emerges from the fight he started depends in large part on how he presents his policy to the public and then navigates his way through the opposition.

Mr. Clinton's opponents include most of the military establishment, whose support he needs for promised defence cuts and restructuring.

There is also strong opposition in Congress, where Mr. Clinton will need lawmakers to join him in unpopular choices later if he is to achieve substantial deficit reduction and health care reforms, as well as to pass his economic

and other domestic priorities.

Already, there were warnings that using executive power to reverse the gay ban without congressional approval would cloud any honeymoon the new president was going to enjoy on Capitol Hill.

Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Sam Nunn said members of the military have a right to be heard and plans hearings in March, regardless of what Mr. Clinton does in the interim. He called Mr. Clinton's approach to the issue "fundamentally flawed" although he tried to temper his first-week feud with the new president Tuesday.

And House Republican whip Newt Gingrich said Tuesday that using executive powers to make such controversial decisions without Congress' blessing "weakens and undermines congressional presidential relations and makes

it harder for the president to work with Congress across the board."

With such deep-seated institutional resistance at the Capitol and Pentagon, Mr. Clinton's logical weapon would be public opinion. But he can't count on public support, either.

Most polls show a majority oppose him on this issue; others reflect an at best ambivalent public that is far more eager for action on the economy and health care.

Mr. Clinton and advisers are acutely aware of those desires, and are trying to whip his economic and health care plans into shape.

That is taking time, however. In the meantime Mr. Clinton's insistence on reversing the Pentagon's policy on homosexuals has become the early barometer of the new president's mettle.

THE WEEK IN PRINT

In continued defiance of world will, Israel refuses to do justice to Palestinian evictees

Reviewed by Elia Nasrallah

JORDANIAN DAILY newspapers last week gave prominence to the question of the 396 Palestinian deportees, domestic affairs and the continued hostile stand on the part of the U.S. administration towards Israel.

The Arab states and the deported men in Southern Lebanon were not surprised by the decision of the Israeli Higher Court of Justice because the court is part of the Zionist entity that has been established at the expense of Arab rights and survives on further acts of aggression and expansion, said Sawt Al Shaab daily in commenting on the Israeli court decision.

Now that Israel has openly shown its defiance of the world community, it is up to the Security Council to find a way to implement its Resolution 799 and force Israel to abide by the international rules, demanded the daily.

Al Dstour attacked the United States for its continued biased stand noting that Washington has given the Israeli court preference over the Security Council resolution.

The paper said that the United States was instrumental in delaying any United Nations' actions against the Jewish state which continues to commit

atrocities condemned by various world nations.

The United States should reconsider its stand and take a more objective position with regard to the whole situation, demanded the paper.

A columnist in Al Ra'i commented on Israel's defiant stand by referring to Mr. Rabin's attack on Boutros Ghali. By launching an attack on the U.N. Secretary General who had demanded that the Security Council impose sanctions on Israel and force it to comply with its resolution, the Rabin government is providing more evidence of its disregard for the world community, said Mohammad Kharoub.

The writer expressed belief that Dr. Ghali would not be able to take any further steps against Israel, simply because he abides by the instructions of the White House which is openly supporting Israel in its defiant stand.

A columnist in Al Ra'i daily described Israel as an international outlaw, intent on keeping the world community embroiled in tragedies, sufferings and deep-rooted problems.

Ahmad Al Mislch said that while the world community directs its attention towards establishing human rights, Israel pursues its barbaric ac-

tions against the Palestinians in particular and the Arab Nation in general.

Mr. Rabin's defiance of the United Nations, said the writer, is tantamount to declaring war on the world community and directly threatening the Arab countries.

Abdul Rahim Omar, a columnist in Al Ra'i daily, expressed the view that the Arab countries in general have failed to support the intifada and left the Palestinians alone in the field. The writer said that the Arabs must help the Palestinians destabilise the presence of the Israeli occupation forces by causing damage to their interests, not only in the occupied lands but also in the world at large.

The writer said that the Arabs should make the Israelis understand that they must pay a dear price for their continued presence on Arab lands.

Taher Al Udwan, a columnist in Al Dstour, directed his attention to the situation in Iraq, noting that thousands of children die every week due to shortages in medical equipment and drugs. While the Americans continue their aggression on Iraq, it is regrettable to see the Arab states showing indifference to the plight of the Iraqi civilian

population, said the writer.

The writer urged popular organisations in the Arab World to take the initiative and ensure a flow of supplies of food and medicine to the Iraqi people.

Ibrahim Al Absi, a columnist in Al Ra'i daily, praised a statement by the Omani Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Yusuf Ben Alawi who expressed Oman's total opposition to the use of force against Iraq and the partition of that Arab state.

The Omani minister's statement rang the alarm to the Arab countries in the Gulf region which, he said, would sooner or later find themselves totally subjected to the colonial powers' whims and desires, should they allow Iraq to face annihilation.

Saleh Al Qallab, a columnist in Al Dstour, described Turkey's prime minister's tour of the Gulf region as aimed at presenting Turkey as servant of the Gulf countries, for which Mr. Demirel demanded a reward.

Describing Turkey's action as a kind of blackmail exercised against the Arab Nation, the writer said that Turkey is also seeking to convince the Arab states in the Gulf region that it would come to their

defence, should they fall victim to Iran's aggression in the future, and that there would be no need for them to mend their fences with Iraq.

Tareq Masarweh, a columnist in Al Ra'i daily, described Gulf states' money paid to Turkey as a kind of bribe to help it pursue its hostile stand against Iraq, under instructions from the Western powers.

The writer said that by allowing its territory to serve as a base for the colonial powers' war planes to raid Iraq, Turkey has proved itself an enemy of the Arabs in general.

At the same time, he added, Turkey is trying to secure its own interests in the Arab World and trying to obtain the \$600 million claims it has lost as a result of losing the revenues from Iraqi oil exports through Turkish territory.

Turning to domestic affairs, a columnist in Al Dstour said that now that the political parties in Jordan have acquired legal status, one can say that the country is on the way to attain full political pluralism.

Taher Al Udwan said that Jordanians look with interest to see the programmes of these parties and their contribution to the country's development, politically, socially and economically.

A columnist in Al Ra'i de-

manded that a special agricultural fund be founded to provide assistance to the Jordanian farmers. It is a well known fact that in every winter season the farms of the Jordan valley are affected either by floods or frosts which cause severe damages and losses to the farmers, said Nazh.

The writer said that the government ought to listen to the demands of the Federation of Jordanian Farmers and try to cancel the interest on loans obtained by these farmers to develop their land as a contribution to the agricultural sector.

A columnist in Al Dstour demanded that Jordan make a move towards the Arab and Islamic countries, urging them to pressure the western powers to lift the blockade imposed on the port of Aqaba.

Mohammad Kawash said that Jordan is the worst hit after Iraq as a result of the sanctions and its economy has been severely shaken over the past two years as a result of the harassment of international shipping at the Gulf of Aqaba. The writer said the Arab and Islamic nations should later take a further step towards ending the sanctions on Iraq altogether as the Arab country has been abiding by all Security Council resolutions.

Donors pledge \$380m aid

(Continued from page 1)

ants already provided for in Jordan's 1993 budget.

According to officials, Jordan needs close to \$1.5 billion in 1993 and similar amount in 1994 in external funding — including debt rescheduling.

Mr. Fariz told the Paris press conference that providing basic services or the 300,000 plus returnees from Kuwait and other Gulf states was draining the Jordanian economy and had unemployment had risen above 25 per cent in 1990 before going down to 16 per cent.

The notable economic achievements of Jordan in its efforts to recover from the shock of 1988 when foreign debts burdened the Kingdom and forced a huge devaluation of the dinar included a scaling down of the budget deficit to six per cent of the gross domestic product in 1992 from over 24 per cent in 1989 and an expected GDP growth of between six and seven per cent in 1993, Mr. Fariz said.

According to the deputy governor of the CBI, inflation rate should be kept to four per cent this year.

"It is welcome news," said economist and columnist Fahed Faneh of the Paris pledge. He said Jordan was seeking around \$350 million as the projected deficit in the balance of payments for this year as determined by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank.

"Obviously the pledge for a higher amount means that adjustments were made to make allowances for possible changes in the actual deficit in the balance of payments," he said.

A Western diplomat described the outcome of the Paris meeting as a "reaffirmation of Europe's keen interest to ensure Jordan's economic stability."

"The very fact the pledges were made on the spot indicates an understanding of Jordan's problems and its efforts on the part of the donors," said the diplomat.

Dr. Faneh also expressed optimism that Jordan would be able to reach an agreement with the London Club this week on rescheduling/settling the Kingdom's commercial debts along the broad terms outlined in a proposal Amman has already submitted to the group of commercial creditors.

The Jordanian delegation which attended the Paris meeting is scheduled to open talks with a steering committee of the London Club Monday. The talks follow the submission of the new Jordanian proposal several weeks ago.

"There is a 60 per cent chance that an agreement could be clinched with the London Club this time," said Dr. Faneh, explaining that areas of disagreement had been narrowed "to the ratio of paribonds and conversion of debts into investments and holdings in Jordanian currency."

The Kingdom's total foreign debts are around \$6.8 billion; about \$4 billion is owed to the Paris Club, around \$1.1 billion to the London Club and the rest to former East bloc countries and Arab and international funds.

Jordan has until June 30 to work out an agreement with the London Club. Around the same time, the Kingdom is also expected to begin negotiations with the Paris Club of creditor governments and state agencies to reschedule debt repayments due after mid-1993.

Israel seeks way out of crisis

(Continued from page 1)

Aziz Rantisi, of pressuring the men against appealing.

"If someone wants to see his family and decides to meet his lawyer he cannot because Rantisi won't let him," Ben-Ami said.

Israel had hoped the court order to let evictees attend appeal hearings might soften U.N. anger over its refusal to obey the Security Council demand to return the men at once.

A report in the mass-circulation Yedioth Ahronoth daily said dozens of evictees might be returned after checks and then held in "administrative detention," which does not require charges.

Mr. Rabin said the 415 men had links with groups that killed six Israeli soldiers. However, he said at the time none of those deported had been charged with a crime.

After the court ruled, France called on the Security Council to force Israel to return evictees. Britain said sanctions were not yet being considered but it would exert pressure on Israel. Arab U.N. envoys agreed on a draft resolution that would ban states and individuals from dealing with Israeli firms with ties to the occupied territories and would bar Israel from human rights meetings.

Secretary-General Boutros Ghali, whose envoys have returned from three missions to Israel empty handed, has called on the Security Council to take "whatever measures are required" to make Israel comply with its order to repatriate the men.

Washington said Thursday it wanted a diplomatic solution outside the Security Council, which said expulsions violated international human rights laws (See page 2). Israel's main ally is expected to press Mr. Rabin for a goodwill gesture.

In Davos, Switzerland, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said that individual legal appeals offer the best solution for the crisis, but his Egyptian counterpart said Israel had to do more.

"The legal avenue is the best to solve the problem," Mr. Peres told reporters at a joint news conference with Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa. "Innocent people will be brought back, others will have to wait."

Mr. Musa said the legal approach was one possible element of a solution, but that other steps were needed as well.

"I'm thinking of a mixed bag of steps, many things at the same time. This is one of them, but it cannot solve the problem by itself. It is a mass deportation and therefore it is an illegal act, it shouldn't have been taken on legal grounds."

The two foreign ministers were among government officials from a number of nations attending the annual World Economic Forum, a privately annual series of discussions in the ski resort of Davos.

Mr. Musa said Egypt wants to help find a solution because the expulsion poses a great risk to the peace process.

Mr. Peres noted that the expulsion order was to expire in nine months to two years.

Asked whether he was suggesting that Israel might shorten the duration of the order as a way out of the impasse, Mr. Peres shrugged: "Suggesting to whom?"

"Hamas wants to force the United Nations, the United States, the Europeans, the Palestinians, the Egyptians, us, everybody, that we should be dependent upon their whim," he added. "If they really want to come back or if they really are interested to demonstrate their innocence, the doors are open."

He said individual evictees could return to territory where the Israeli government and army can guarantee their safety.

"They can come personally to put their appeal to put their case before a judicial committee. Israel has appointed 14 judicial committees in order to respond as quickly as we get any request."

Evictees shun appeal process

(Continued from page 1)

The evictees have stressed that the only solution acceptable by them was implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 799, which called for their immediate return to the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip from where they were expelled Dec. 17.

Israel accused the men of being activists in the fundamentalist Muslim Hamas and Islamic Jihad factions.

The expulsion came after six Israeli troops were killed in the occupied territories late last year. The evictees ended a 24-hours

hunger strike at 4 a.m. (0200 GMT) Friday and resumed their normal life after protesting the alleged killing of fellow Palestinians by Israeli forces in the occupied territories.

Many evictees sat on rocks near their tents on a mountain slope in southeast Lebanon listening to radio reports about developments related to their ordeal.

The 396 Palestinians urged Arab states to press for tough U.N. sanctions to make the Jewish state take them back.

Israeli soldiers in South Lebanon set up two tents on the southern tip of a muddy piece of land so that any evictee who wants to appeal can meet his lawyer.

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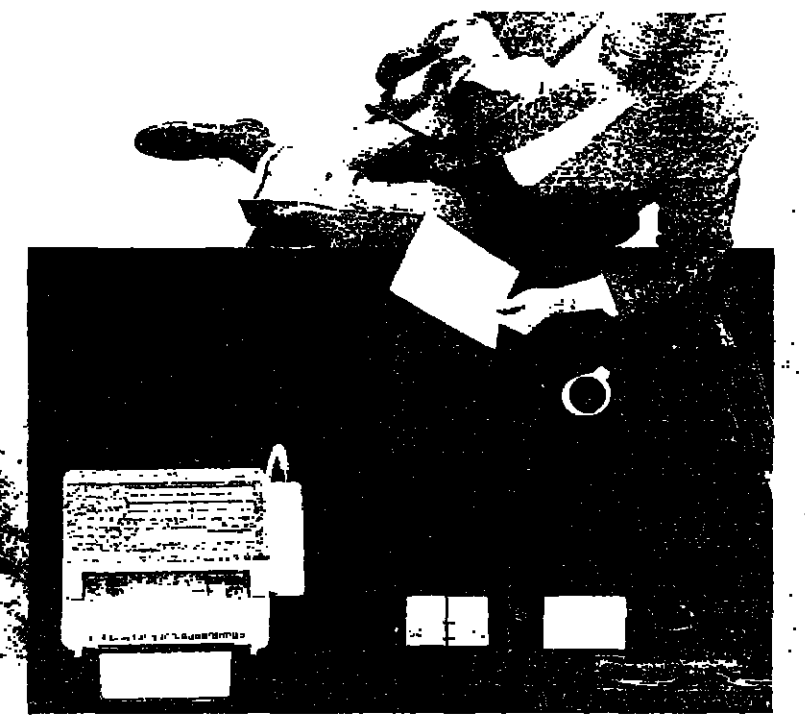
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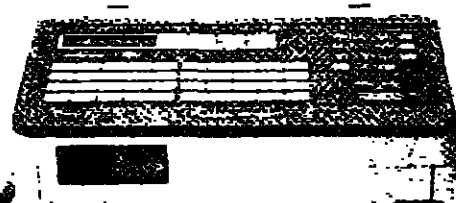
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Dayan

(Continued from page 1)

invited to Tunis by the Tunisian government.

Ms. Dayan said she had an informal meeting on Thursday with Nabil Shaath, Mr. Arafat's political adviser, Yasser Abed-Rabbo, PLO Executive Committee member, and Mr. Hussein. She said she respected Mr. Rabin's position that Israel did not want to formally negotiate with the PLO — the PLO directs

the Palestinian peace delegation from behind the scenes — but said that should not rule out informal contacts.

"What did they think? That it (the repeal of the ban) was something academic," she said.

Ms. Dayan told the Associated Press later she had "excellent, constructive and very pleasant talks with Chairman Arafat."

She said she was "not negotiating, but on a goodwill mission with a message of peace from the majority of the people in Israel who have voted for this government."

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Sharif Zeid calls for backing national teams

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan's national soccer team which will be participating in the World Cup qualifying rounds in May will hopefully be getting much needed sponsorship and encouragement from all sectors of society after a recent decision by Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker.

At a prize giving ceremony organized by Al Baqa'a Club in appreciation of its sponsors and excellent athletes, the prime minister reiterated the government's support of athletes and national teams and its commitment to help players achieve the best results for the Kingdom.

The prime minister said that giving members of the Kingdom's national soccer team the chance to fully participate in the training camps for the World Cup matches was a necessity that should be regarded as a high priority by everyone.

The decision to give players official permission to take leave from their work or studies came after a proposal by the Jordan Soccer Federation (JSF) which received immediate backing from Sharif Zeid, who Thursday again called on public and private institutions to cooperate and insure athletes are given official availability for their preparations.



Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker

According to JSF Chairman Fakhri Bilbeisi, the prime minister's call will give much impetus to the players' and trainers' efforts to prepare the team in the best way possible.

"Most players are either students or employees in different institutions. Giving the athletes official leave will be these institutions' contribution to help improve sports in the country," Mr. Bilbeisi told the Jordan Times.

"We are very grateful for the prime minister's gesture and encouragement, and we hope the national team will achieve good results," he added. Jordan will be playing the first leg of the World Cup qualifying matches May 22-30. Jordan's group includes China, Yemen, Iraq, and Pakistan.

Ahli, Orthodoxi, JBF hit collision course

Controversy ensnares basketball championship

By Aileen Bannayan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Fans Friday missed the chance to watch the Kingdom's top-two basketball teams — Al Ahli and Al Orthodoxi — clash in a tie-breaker to determine this year's championship when controversy hit the tournament following an Al Ahli protest over the results of an earlier clash with Al Orthodoxi.

The dispute arose when Al Ahli lodged a formal memorandum to the Jordan Basketball Federation (JBF) complaining about "obvious mismanagement" of the Tuesday match which was won by Al Orthodoxi 84-81 in overtime play.

The JBF rejected the protest and accepted a recommendation by the committee of referees that the results stand, leaving Al Ahli and Al Orthodoxi tied with 27 points each in the overall standings.

Tuesday's match was the second leg of the finals of the tournament. The first leg was won by Al Ahli 68-65 on Dec. 30 and the JBF's acceptance of Al Orthodoxi as Tuesday's victor warranted a third match as tie-breaker.

The JBF meanwhile announced the indefinite postponement of the tie-breaker, which Al Ahli said they would not play in any case.

Al Ahli and Al Orthodoxi said they were surprised Friday when they heard on the sports programme of Jordan Television that the JBF had decided to postpone the match. Both clubs said that they had not been informed of the postponement.

The JBF held a press conference Thursday in which its Chairman, Fadi Ghandour, explained the federation's decision.

Al Ahli had based their objection on the fact that Al Orthodoxi were awarded two points which had been ruled out by the referee.

Due to the enormous number of fans who were surrounding the court, the scoresheet referee failed to see that the court referee had ruled the two points out, Al Ahli said. Consequently the scoresheet and scoresheet recorded an extra two points for Al Orthodoxi.

Mr. Ghandour explained that based on article 68 of international basketball rules, the referees committee had advised the JBF that Al Ahli could not protest the two points now because they should have objected immediately — not after the match.

Al Ahli officials and technical advisor Ismail Harb argued that Al Ahli had protested immediately but they were disregarded by the court and scoresheet referees. "We protested the moment we

realized there was a mistake, and the videotape recording of the match clearly shows that. What other evidence does the JBF need," Mr. Harb told the Jordan Times.

According to the JBF, the referees committee insists that Al Ahli did not approach the scoresheet referee and no-one protested regarding the two points.

Another Al Ahli objection was over what it said was the failure of the scoresheet referee to record a technical foul on Marwan Al Saeedi when Al Ahli was leading 75-74 with 15 seconds remaining in the second half.

According to Al Ahli and based on the videotape recording of the match, the referee pointed to a jump ball and simultaneous fouls on Al Orthodoxi's Muntaser Abul Tayyeb and Saeedi. The referee later gave Saeedi the technical foul and Abul Tayyeb scored a free throw and scored Al Orthodoxi's point which tied the match.

Al Ahli claim that Abul Tayyeb's foul was his fifth and the player should have been ordered off the court. Instead, the referee allowed him to shoot the free throw, the club said. In addition, Al Ahli's copy of the scoresheet does not show Saeedi's foul.

The JBF, however, asserted that the referee had not awarded

the simultaneous fouls but had ruled a technical foul on Saeedi which the top four copies of the scoresheet clearly show and Al Ahli's copy is not clear.

According to Ahli board member Samir Janakat, the club will now appeal to Minister of Youth Saleh Irsheidat to look into the matter.

"There has been an obvious injustice and Al Ahli cannot remain silent on such a thing," Janakat told the Jordan Times.

"We objected to the referees according to article 68 and asked the JBF to seriously review the matter. We hope the minister of youth will do justice to our appeal."

The JBF admitted that there was obvious wrongdoing on the part of the referees, mainly attributed to the unprecedented crowd of over 6,000 fans attending the match.

Mr. Ghandour told the press that the JBF had contemplated the idea of a rematch but both teams had rejected the idea.

JBF officials could not be contacted Friday.

Meanwhile informed JBF sources said that advertisers at the Sports Palace Court were contemplating the idea of not paying the JBF because their billboards were blocked by fans and their advertisements failed to appear on JTV.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY JANUARY 30, 1993

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Today gives an excellent chance to lend assistance to a co-worker that will be truly valuable and appreciated. If there is an elderly person around you, do inquire in person for you are sure to find a genuine need to be addressed.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) The plan of action that you have decided upon today should be carried out without a hitch with success, tonight relax and build up your vitality.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) A great day when you have the cleverness to put into motion a course of action whereby recreation will be more satisfying in the future.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) This is a day to invite those persons into your home and to entertain them in a distinguished fashion so that you make good friends for the future.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) A day to contact those usual allies with whom you have some interesting ideas for adding to your daily duties, making them more exciting.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Discuss fairly practical problems with members of your own clan and you can come to wise and sensible solutions that last for some time to come.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Look into the personal outlets

that mean something special to you and go after them in a positive manner today and they should be yours quickly.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) An excellent day for you to think out and decide upon the confidential course of action you wish to pursue in order to gain private longings.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) A day for you to be more gregarious for getting in touch with friends and acquaintances now will give you the chance to obtain some personal aim.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Get right into whatever vocational or other interests of an outside nature that face you and you find them able to be done in a satisfactory manner.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) This is your time to look beyond your present interests and into a course of action in the future whereby you can increase your wellbeing.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Devise a business course or one of a practical nature by which you will be able to handle whatever comes your way more easily in the future.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Now you have that day for which you have been waiting when you can have a frank and direct discussion with an associate and come to an understanding.

Courier, Edberg advance to final

MELBOURNE (Agencies) — Defending champion Jim Courier and two-time title holder Stefan Edberg bludgeoned their way to straight set semifinal victories Friday, setting up a repeat straight set semifinal showdown Friday, setting up a repeat showdown at the Australian Open.

Courier overcame determined but outgunned No. 14 seed Michael Stich, while Edberg recovered from a dismal start to defeat Pete Sampras.

Top-seeded Courier, 22, seeking the fourth Grand Slam title of his career, beat the irritable German 7-6 (7-4), 6-4, 6-2 in just two hours and 16 minutes.

After dropping serve in the third game of the match, Courier was not broken again.

Edberg, the No. 2 seed, fell behind 4-0 in the first set against No. 3 seed Sampras but then roared back to win 7-6 (7-5), 6-3, 7-6 (7-3) against the American, who received treatment for shin splints during the match.

"He let me off the hook a little bit and from then on I felt very comfortable," Edberg said.

Sampras led 5-2 in the third set but wilted as Edberg turned up the heat. The American's become increasingly erratic and he became a number of simple volleys while the Swede kept his nerve.

Edberg said he had recovered from a back injury which hampered him in his previous two matches. Asked how the injury was, he replied: "Great."

Edberg, 27, gained the 11th Grand Slam final of his career and is seeking his seventh title.

Former U.S. Open champion Sampras said Edberg's experience had proved crucial.



Steffi Graf thanks her German fans for their support after she defeated Arantxa Sanchez Vicario. "It seems that whenever he needs a big point he gets it, and I struggle," he said. "I'm pretty disappointed. I thought I was playing pretty well coming into today."

In last year's title match, Courier beat Edberg in four sets. "It was a good match for me. It wasn't easy," Courier said. "I'm playing better than average," he said.

The only time Courier looked in trouble was when former Wimbledon champion Stich broke to lead 2-1. Courier broke back immediately, however, and from then on looked in command.

Edberg said he was an underdog in the final but felt confident.

The last couple of days I've really felt like I'm hitting the ball well," he said. "Jim's playing on

top of his game at the moment, but he's not unbeatable."

There was no women's singles action Friday.

Grand Slam showdown for Graf, Seles

The stage is set for the classic women's final that everyone predicted for the first Grand Slam event of the year.

But there's a problem, neither world number one Monica Seles nor arch rival Steffi Graf believe they are playing according to the script.

Despite results which show that both top seeds have blasted their opponents off the court on their way to Saturday's final, neither of the protagonists seem satisfied by their game.

"Sort of OK, not extraordinary, nothing special," Graf said after her straight sets victory in a high-quality semifinal against Spain's world number four Arantxa Sanchez Vicario.

"I have played some good solid tennis but I haven't played anything incredible," 19-year-old Seles said after her 6-1, 6-1 annihilation of Argentina's number three seed Gabriela Sabatini in the other semifinal.

The tennis pundits and their opponents beg to differ.

Teenager Jennifer Capriati, winner of the New South Wales Open earlier this month and hoping to break through for her first Grand Slam title this year, was in no doubt about Graf's form after her straight sets loss in the quarter-finals.

"This is the first time I guess that I was playing well against her and she was consistent and playing great... she had an answer for



Gabriela Sabatini looks dejected after losing her match against Monica Seles.

"Everything," Capriati told reporters. Sabatini was equally in awe of Seles after her semifinal defeat.

"She is playing very well... she is so focussed and she plays her best in each tournament, she is very tough," Sabatini said.

The statistics show that the two women are streets ahead of their nearest rivals and with Graf depriving Seles of the elusive Grand Slam in 1992 by taking last year's Wimbledon title, the Open final has an added edge.

Seles is aiming for her hat-trick of Open wins and an incredible eighth Grand Slam title in under three years.

Graf, winner of 11 Grand Slam titles and world number one for a record 186 weeks before Seles took her crown, will be tilting at her fourth Australian Open title.

SPORTS NEWS IN BRIEF

Zadar forced to move home games due to unrest

MUNICH (R) — Croatian basketball side KK Zadar have been forced to move home games in the Men's European Championships' Club Cup to Zagreb because of the military unrest in the area around the city. The International Basketball Federation (FIBA) said Friday it had decided next Wednesday's Pool B game against Germany's Bayer Leverkusen would be held in Zagreb. Zadar's clashes with Real Madrid and French side Orthez will also be in Zagreb.

Psst, wanna buy a Super Bowl ticket — for \$1,500

LOS ANGELES (R) — There is still time to get a prime seat on the 50-yard line at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena for Sunday's Bowl — providing you have \$1,500 to spare. That is the price Los Angeles ticket agencies are charging for the most sought after seats, which have a face value of \$175. Even the cheapest tickets, which afford a bird's eye view from high up in the end zone, where binoculars are a must, are going for \$525.

French yachtsman out of round-the-world race

DUNEDIN, New Zealand (AP) — French solo yachtsman Bertrand de Broc was towed into Dunedin Harbor Friday, scuttled out of an around-the-world race by a design problem. De Broc was 1,500 kilometres south of New Zealand and lying third in the French-run Vendee Globe Challenge when he received a telex from the boat's designer saying the keel was unsafe. The 12.5-metric ton yacht, group LG, was sailing well, but in France the designer discovered that another boat with similar keel specifications needed urgent reinforcement. He advised De Broc to put into the nearest port. The race has already claimed two lives. Thirteen yachts started the race and nine are left, De Broc said.

Speculation mounts over Senna

LONDON (R) — Ayrton Senna's future was the subject of speculation again following confirmation from the Penske Indycar racing team that former test driver Paul Tracy will partner Emerson Fittipaldi this year. Senna, the Brazilian three-times Formula One world drivers' champion, had been expected to sign for Penske, joining current F1 champion Nigel Mansell on the McLaren Indycar circuit. But Senna, whose place with the McLaren F1 team remains open, has not yet confirmed his plans for this season after being linked with both Penske and McLaren and hinting he may take a year's rest.

Hodge given all-clear after health scare

LONDON (R) — Steve Hodge, Leeds United's former England midfielder, has been given the go-ahead by doctors to continue his playing career after a health scare. Hodge, 30, has revealed he has been suffering from a mild form of me. Myalgic encephalomyelitis, which induces chronic fatigue. But club medical experts have now given him the all-clear and Leeds manager Howard Wilkinson said: "The fact that Steve was diagnosed as having suffered a mild dose of me came as a shock, but news that he has been cleared means that he can now look forward with great heart."

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMMAM HIRSH
1992 Tribune Media Services Inc.

THINGS MIGHT BE WORSE THAN THEY SEEM

Both vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH
♠ A 5
♥ J 8 7
♦ 9 8 7
♣ A 10 9 2

EAST
♠ Q 10 2
♥ A Q 3
♦ A K Q J 6 2
♣ 10 4 3

SOUTH
♠ K J 8 6 4 3
♥ K 10 9 6
♦ 5
♣ K 4

The bidding:
South West North East
1 ♠ 2 DbI Pass
2 ♠ Pass 3 Pass
4 ♠ Pass Pass Pass

in the auction. After opening an aceless hand with only 10 high-card points, he went on to game after receiving an invitational raise from partner. There are those who would claim that South fully deserved the fate that befell him.

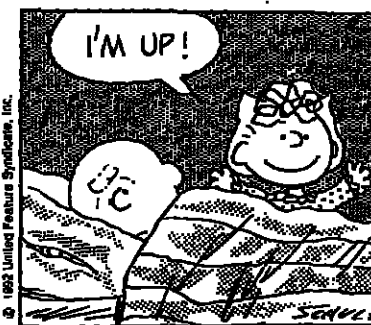
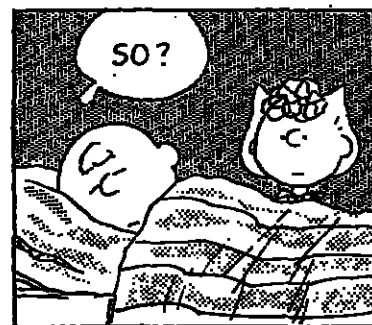
West led the king of diamonds and continued the suit, declarer ruffing. Dummy was entered with the ace of spades and a heart was led to the aine. Smith contributed the three!

Impressed by the success of the finesse declarer cashed the king of spades, ruffed a spade with the jack as West discarded a club and repeated the trump finesse—and the roof fell in.

Smith took the queen of hearts, cashed the ace to draw all the trumps, then ran off four diamond tricks to intact a four-trick set on the harmless declarer.

This hand contains a valuable lesson. If you can afford to hold up winning a key trick, it is usually right to do so. It might cause declarer to misread the hand, or spend a vital entry in a useless cause.

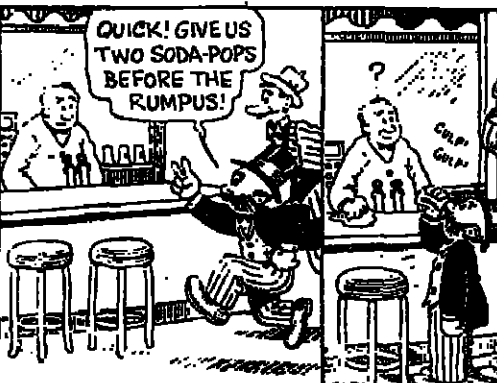
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF.

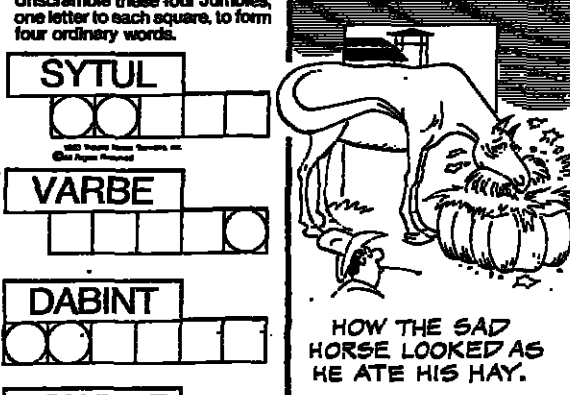
By Harris



"Saturday was named after Satu, the ancient Greek god of sloppiness!"

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

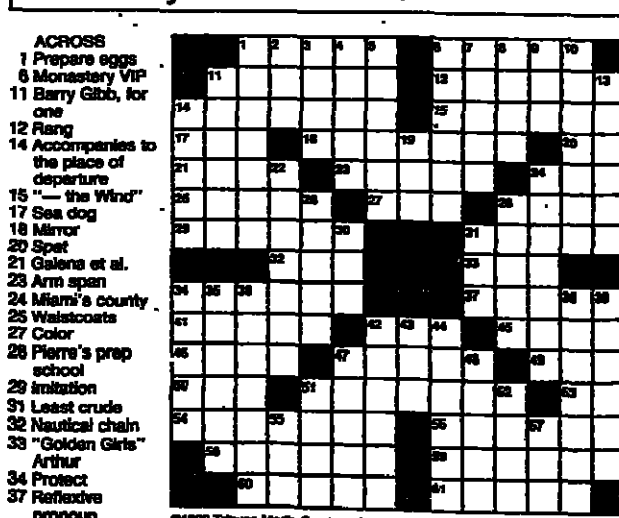


Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here:

Yesterday's Jumbles: BERTH SKIMP MEDLEY CLOUDY
Answer: People with complaints of long standing—COMMITTEES

THE Daily Crossword by Al Becker



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Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:

1 Prepare eggs
2 Monetary unit
3 Bar of gold, for one
4 Ring
5 Acupuncture to the place of departure
6 "the Wind"
7 East dog
8 Mirror
9 Spot
10 Least of all
11 Arm span
12 Miami's county
13 Westcoast
14 Color
15 Pierre's prep school
16 Initiation
17 Least crude
18 Nautical chain
19 "Golden Girls"
20 Arthur
21 Protest
22 Refractive pronoun
23 Bird of prey
24 Chart
25 Playful mammal
26 Wee
27 Obscure
28 Two-wheeled carriage
29 Gold: Sp.
30 Concerned
31 Ball
32 San Francisco neighborhood
33 Philosopher, ruler
34 Hermit
35 Close
36 A business
37 O'Connor
38 Collections of
39 Owner's kin
40 JEH was VP here
41 Half U.
42 the dog (hangover remedy)
43 Sclerosis
44 Alude
45 Was the third man in the ring
46 Each
47 Judge's place
48 That coin
49 Corrida cheer
50 Outdoor area
51 Salad porter
52 Electron tubes
53 Range
54 Bird word
55 Ball
56 Majestic
57 Hereditary
58 Philosopher, ruler
59 Close
60 Remain stationary in water
61 Owner's kin
62 JEH was VP here
63 Half U.
64 the dog (hangover remedy)
65 Sclerosis
66 Alude
67 Was the third man in the ring
68 Each
69 Certain chicken
70 Oberon and Haggard
71 Corrida cheer
72 Lure
73 Owned
74 River of song
75 Born

Financial Markets

Jordan Times
in co-operation with
Cairo Amman Bank

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close Date: 27/1/93	Tokyo Close Date: 26/1/93
Sterling Pound	1.5105	1.5219
Deutsche Mark	1.5870	1.5821
Swiss Franc	1.4633	1.4598
French Franc	5.3705	5.3458 **
Japanese Yen	124.08	124.15
European Currency Unit	1.2305	1.2361 **

(USD per JYD)
European Opening at 8:00 a.m. GMT

European Opening at 8:00 a.m. GMT

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTH	6 MTH	12 MTH
U.S. Dollar	3.06	3.18	3.31	3.68
Sterling Pound	6.50	6.12	5.67	5.68
Deutsche Mark	8.56	8.43	8.06	7.50
Swiss Franc	5.50	5.50	5.37	5.12
French Franc	12.37	12.00	10.75	9.62
Japanese Yen	3.62	3.50	3.43	3.30
European Currency Unit	9.50	9.62	9.43	8.81

Interbank bid rates for amounts exceeding 1 U.S. dollar, 1,000,000 or equivalent.

Precious Metals	1 MTH	3 MTH	6 MTH	12 MTH
Gold	329.90	6.50	Silver	5.69
				.080

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.665	0.687
Sterling Pound	1.0405	1.0457
Deutsche Mark	0.4326	0.4348
Swiss Franc	0.4692	0.4715
French Franc	0.1278	0.1284
Japanese Yen	0.5514	0.5542
Dutch Guilder	0.3845	0.3864
Swedish Krona	0.0964	0.0969
Italian Lira	0.0462	0.0464
Belgian Franc	0.02102	0.02113

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.7960	1.8070
Lebanese Lira	0.0350	0.0400
Saudi Riyal	0.1822	0.1834
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.3300	2.2900
Qatari Riyal	0.1850	0.1872
Egyptian Pound	0.1950	0.2150
Omani Riyal	1.7470	1.7610
UAE Dirham	0.1850	0.1872
Greek Drachma	0.3200	0.3300
Cypriot Pound	1.4385	1.4640

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Index	26/1/93	27/1/93	28/1/93
All-Share	189.94	189.69	
Banking Sector	158.36	158.22	
Insurance Sector	208.24	209.82	
Industry Sector	260.00	259.33	
Services Sector	253.28	253.61	

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London Foreign Exchange and bullion markets Friday.

One U.S. dollar	1.2685/90	Canadian dollar	1.5920/30
	1.7920/30	Deutsche marks	1.4698/4708
	32.70/74	Dutch guilders	32.70/74
	5.3910/60	Swiss francs	1487/1492
	124.65/70	Belgian francs	124.65/70
	7.2400/2500	French francs	1487/1492
	6.7900/8000	Italian lire	124.65/70
	6.1400/1500	Japanese yen	7.2400/2500
One sterling	1.5040/50	Swedish crowns	6.7900/8000
One ounce of gold	\$330.75/331.05	Norwegian crowns	6.1400/1500
		Danish crowns	1.5040/50

Major secures valuable orders

LONDON (R) — Prime Minister John Major returned Friday from a tour of India and the Gulf that yielded valuable trade deals and showed a new commitment to look abroad to rescue Britain's floundering economy.

Chancellor of the Exchequer Norman Lamont told Conservative members of parliament Thursday he intended to nurture fragile signs of recovery. Worse than expected trade figures Thursday showed the highest monthly deficit for 2½ years in December.

Arms deals worth hundreds of millions of pounds clinched in Oman and Saudi Arabia followed Mr. Major's five days in India with a delegation of 17 businessmen drumming up new investment and trade possibilities.

"Orders abroad mean jobs at home," Mr. Major told reporters on his plane. Each time a new deal was announced the number of people saved from joining the ranks of the unemployed was also given. Unemployment is nearing three million after a recession of more than two years.

The biggest deal was reached in Riyadh where Saudi Arabia said it had agreed to go ahead with a long-delayed purchase of 48 Tornado warplanes.

British officials declined to put a value on the contract, part of the Al Yamama (dove) bilateral defence programme signed in 1985 already worth about £10 billion (\$15.15 billion) in sales of British planes, ships and other equipment.

Earlier Thursday, after talks with Sultan Qaboos at a remote desert camp, Mr. Major announced Oman was to buy 36 Challenger-II tanks for £150 mil-

lion (\$227.3 million). During the India visit, which symbolised a more practical approach to the former colony after decades of mistrust, Mr. Major spoke of creating an "export-led recovery in Britain."

Two investment projects were announced — in gas distributions and power supplies — and one of the British businessmen, the chairman of Sun Life Assurance Society, Peter Grant, said he expected British companies to agree investment of £3 billion (\$4.55 billion) to £4 billion (\$6.06 billion) in India in the next six months.

Armenia raises key prices to tackle sudden power crisis

YEREVAN (R) — The Armenian government struggling to cope with an energy crisis that has left the centre of the capital Yerevan almost completely blacked out, announced sharp price rises Friday for gas and electricity.

State radio said that from Monday electricity, now just 1.50 rubles (a quarter of a U.S. cent) per kilowatt would go up seven-and-a-half times while cooking gas would rise tenfold from 10.5 rubles (two cents) per person per month to 150 (20 cents).

Armenia, savaged by economic collapse and a bloody territorial dispute with Azerbaijan, has been almost without power since a key gas pipeline was blown up last Saturday in neighbouring Georgia.

In the centre of Yerevan only the post office had electric lights on. The metro and some buses were running but there were no trams or trolleybuses.

Residents are currently restricted to an hour a day of elec-

tricity on average in many residential districts and temperatures in many homes and offices were below freezing.

The streets of Yerevan were full of people walking to work, with few cars on the roads.

However, Georgian leader Eduard Shevardnadze said Thursday that Armenia would start getting some gas Saturday through an emergency pipeline.

Armenian Energy Minister Sepukh Tashy confirmed this Friday. "Temporary repairs to the gas pipeline should be completed today," he said by telephone.

State radio also announced price rises in other essential services, designed in part as a belated response to rampant inflation, which was at least 2,200 per cent in 1992.

It said the cost of domestic water supplies would go up sixfold, telephone calls tenfold, heating two and a half-fold and rubbish collection fivefold.

Iranian parliament sets foreign exchange budgets

NICOSIA (R) — The Iranian parliament (Majlis) Friday allotted \$850 million to defence and \$2.4 billion to food and fuel imports in the budget for the year starting March 21.

The Majlis also authorised the use of \$2.6 billion in foreign credits for oil production and refining projects, Tehran radio said.

The lawmakers, holding a rare session on the Muslim holiday to meet a Sunday budget deadline, approved a total of \$3.8 billion in hard cash expenditures at a subsidised rate of about 70 riyals per dollar.

They included \$1.2 billion for fuel, \$1.2 billion for wheat, meat, sugar, rice, cooking oil and cheese, \$850 million for defence, \$452 million mainly for medicine and baby formula, and \$80 million for Iranians studying in foreign universities, the radio said.

All other transactions would use a floating rate, currently about 1,500 riyals per dollar, as part of a currency reform which

amounts to a sharp devaluation of the rial.

The approved figures were little changed from those in the government draft budget which is based on total crude oil export revenue of about \$17 billion.

The Majlis authorised the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) to "create up to \$2.6 billion of commitments" through contracts with reliable foreign companies "for building and expanding the Bandar Abbas oil refinery and its lubricants unit and projects in five offshore oil fields in the Gulf."

The radio listed the offshore projects as development of Balal and Sirri fields and reconstruction and upgrading of Abuzar, Soroush and Bahregansar, which were damaged during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war.

The Majlis required that the foreign companies should subcontract at least 30 per cent of the hard currency portion of each project to Iranian firms, the radio said.

Greenspan endorses Clinton's deficit reduction goals



Alan Greenspan

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal Reserve (Fed) Chairman Alan Greenspan endorsed President Clinton's deficit reduction goals Thursday and said long-term interest rates would fall dramatically if they were met.

After a White House meeting with Mr. Clinton, Mr. Greenspan told the Senate Budget Committee that the new administration's programme, which Mr. Clinton will unveil on Feb. 17, appeared to be in line with changes the Fed believes are necessary to cope with the economy's problems.

Mr. Greenspan said the Fed's target for the economy "does not differ from the goal the new president is carrying forward in his programme."

He said that if financial markets perceive that the combination of tax increases and spending cuts needed to reduce the deficit were credible then it would result in an immediate drop in long-term interest rates.

He said the resulting decline in home mortgage rates and corporate financing costs would stimulate the economy far more than any short-term programme Congress could enact.

"If the markets perceive that this issue (the deficit) is being addressed, we could get a very dramatic decline in long-term 'head winds' that are holding activity back," Mr. Greenspan told senators.

The new administration had been actively seeking Mr. Greenspan's endorsement of its programme of modest economic stimulus this year followed by tax increases and spending decreases to cut the deficit by \$145 billion by 1996. The deficit is expected to hit a record \$327 billion this year.

Specifically asked how much the deficit should be cut, Mr. Greenspan said that the \$145 billion goal mentioned by Mr. Clinton was not "off base" for a figure the markets would consider credible.

He said more important than the specific dollar amount of deficit cuts was the need to "hard-wire" the savings by changing

laws to ensure the deficit cuts were realised.

The new administration, seeking to engender a new spirit of cooperation with the Fed, invited Mr. Greenspan to the White House Thursday for a meeting with the president and his top economic team.

Referring to thousands of new layoffs announced this week by some of America's biggest companies, Mr. Clinton said, there is also a lot of troubling news about jobs. "We've got a lot of work to do."

Mr. Clinton had his top economic advisers, attend the session, including Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen, Budget Director Leon Panetta and Robert Rubin, head of Mr. Clinton's new National Economic Council, the White House group that is supposed to coordinate administration economic policies.

Mr. Clinton is scheduled to unveil both his short-term stimulus package and his long-term plan for cutting the deficit during a joint session of Congress on Feb. 17.

Mr. Greenspan also said Thursday he believes the long-awaited economic recovery is gaining strength, but he warned of a number of still dangerous "head winds" that are holding activity back.

In his testimony, Mr. Greenspan cited good news in the past six months that economic activity was picking up speed while inflation was remaining well under control.

But he listed a host of problems still besetting the nation from weak real estate prices and cutbacks in military spending to sluggish job growth.

Mr. Greenspan's appearance before the Congressional Joint Economic Committee marked his first congressional testimony in six months. It came at a time when Democrats are putting heavy pressure on the central bank to keep interest rates low so as not to sabotage President Clinton's economic programme.

FOR RENT

A furnished ground floor apartment, located in Um Uthaina - East of Amra Hotel. The apartment consists of 2 bedrooms, living room, guest room, kitchen, bathroom and a veranda, with central heating and a telephone. The apartment is with a private entrance and a garden. Annual rent for JD 6,000.

For information, call 623725 from 10 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. and 811068 after 7 p.m.

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Clinton moves to lift ban on gays in the military

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bill Clinton Friday moved to lift a 50-year ban on homosexuals in the military after encountering intense controversy in Congress and the Defence Department.

Mr. Clinton directed that an executive order reversing the ban be prepared by July 15 and that military recruiters suspend asking applicants about their sexual orientation.

He also suspended the discharge of homosexuals from the military, solely because of their sexual orientation, until he has reviewed the current policy.

He said Defence Secretary Les Aspin would prepare the draft order formally by July 15.

Acknowledging the controversy, Mr. Clinton conceded his plan was not everything he originally had hoped for. But he called his plan a "step in the right direction."

He added, "The issue is whether men and women who have served with real distinction should be excluded

from military service solely on the basis of their status."

"And I believe they should not," he said.

In his remarks — his first question and answer session with reporters since taking office — Mr. Clinton acknowledged that the controversial issue had seemed to crowd out other issues of importance to Americans, such as health and economic policy.

Mr. Clinton spoke after several days of private negotiations with Senate Democrats in an effort to form a united front against an expected Republican bid to keep the ban in force.

The Clinton administration had said the president planned to make an announcement two days ago on gays in uniform, but opposition from the U.S. military command and congressional leaders forced him to delay and seek compromise.

He made his announcement a day after a federal judge in California ruled the ban unconstitutional. The ruling by U.S. District

Judge Terry Hatter on Thursday applies only within portions of California, but the White House said in advance of Mr. Clinton's comment that an appeal was unlikely.

Military officials described the action as the most profound social change in the military since the armed forces were racially integrated in the 1950s. Mr. Clinton met earlier in the week with General Colin Powell, and the rest of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to hear their concerns about the determination to end the ban.

The presidency outlined numerous steps to be taken over the next several months as the ramifications of his policy are studied. But he made clear his overall goal of ending the practice of excluding homosexuals from the military.

"I think this is a dramatic step forward. Normally in the history of civil rights advancements, presidents have not been in the forefront," he said.

For his part, Sen. Sam Nunn,

chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, pledged thorough hearings in Congress that will air the volatile issue of homosexuality in the military.

"Mr. Clinton said the court's ruling strengthened his hand by both supporting the principle that he had endorsed and by making it possible to put the principle into practice."

Meanwhile, not since the flag-burning issue a few years ago have veterans been as united as they are now against president Clinton.

"Our phones have been ringing off the hooks," said Chuck Jackson, executive vice president of the Non-Commissioned Officers Association. "We tell them, 'don't call us, call your representatives.'"

Mr. Jackson said it has been more than a decade since the 160,000-member non-commissioned officers group has received so many calls and letters on an issue.

Shooting continues in Zaire capital after French envoy killed in riots

KINSHASA (R) — Sporadic gunfire broke the silence in the Zairean capital Kinshasa Friday and most residents stayed home after a night of rioting by soldiers.

French Ambassador Philippe Bernard and at least two other civilians were shot dead Thursday but no official death toll was available.

Diplomats said Mr. Bernard was killed in his city-centre office, apparently by a stray bullet. A Zairean secretary at the embassy and a French oil-worker also died in the violence, they said.

Witnesses said troops from President Mobutu Sese Seko's elite Presidential Guard also shot dead rampaging soldiers and civilian looters.

France is preparing to evacuate its nationals from Zaire and a French official in Paris said a French army battalion was going to the congolesse capital Brazzaville, across the Congo River from Kinshasa.

The soldiers rioted in anger at receiving their pay in new five million Zaire banknotes, worth about \$2.

Mr. Mobutu introduced the notes but Prime Minister Etienne Tshisekedi has dismissed them as worthless and inflationary.

Disgruntled troops last month repeatedly stormed through Zairean towns and cities, looting homes and businesses, destroying

property and killing civilians who got in their way.

Belgian Foreign Minister Willy Claes said in a radio interview Thursday that the latest outbreak reminded him of September 1991, when soldiers led a massive looting spree that left the country's economy in ruins.

At least 250 people died in the turmoil in 1991 and Belgium, the former colonial power in Zaire, sent about 1,000 troops to help evacuate foreigners.

French soldiers also joined the 1991 operation.

The French Foreign Ministry said there were currently about 1,000 French nationals and 3,000 Belgians in Zaire.

Portugal's Defence Ministry said it had two planes standing by to evacuate its nationals, estimated at only a few hundred.

The row over Zaire's currency is part of a power struggle between Mr. Mobutu, striving to cling to as many of his presidential powers as possible, and Mr. Tshisekedi, seeking to lead Zaire to multi-party democracy.

Opposition to Mr. Mobutu has been mounting but a campaign of civil disobedience and mass protest planned for last week fizzled out after a few days.

French Defence Minister Pierre Joxe said Friday France's ambassador to Zaire was killed deliberately by a burst of machinegun fire and France may

send in troops to protect its nationals.

"It was not a stray bullet as the first agency reports said," Mr. Joxe told a news conference, commenting on the death of Ambassador Bernard.

"It was a burst of automatic weapons fire directed at the building (where he was) which brought about his death and that of a Zairean employee of the French embassy," said Mr. Joxe, who is on a two-day visit to Portugal.

Asked whether France would intervene militarily to restore order in Zaire or evacuate French nationals from the central African country, Mr. Joxe said:

"Since this morning certain measures have been studied and the first arrangements have been made to protect and if necessary evacuate French citizens and those of friendly countries who may be threatened in Kinshasa, as has happened in the past."

Pressed to clarify whether France would actually send troops to Zaire, as it has done several times in the past, Mr. Joxe replied: "It is possible."

Portuguese Defence Minister Fernando Nogueira said the Portuguese Air Force had two C-130 Hercules transport planes standing by to fly to Zaire to evacuate several hundred Portuguese residents if necessary.

Angolans, UNITA locked in talks on conflict

ADDIS ABABA (R) — Talks between the Angolan government and the UNITA rebels moved on a Friday and were now firmly focused on the key issues threatening the country with renewed civil war.

A UNITA spokesman said, "We have begun tackling the issues that confront our country with the seriousness they deserve."

Mr. Samondo said the negotiations were going well and taking in a friendly and constructive atmosphere. He gave no other details.

"Both delegations were cooperative and there were no major problems which were not resolved," Mr. Samondo said.

He added consultative meetings between his delegation and the government in the last two days had previously concentrated on preparing an acceptable agenda for the talks.

A four-point agenda drawn up for discussion includes the restructuring of a now-defunct ceasefire, the conclusion of peace agreements already under negotiation, the role of the U.N. in bringing about peace, and the freeing of prisoners of war.

A government spokesman and Mr. Samondo said the delegations would split into two sub-committees to deal separately with the main political and military differences.

The political committee will address itself to points related to the fulfilment of the peace accord while the military team will discuss an immediate ceasefire and the related security situation in the war-devastated country.

Margaret Anstee, U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali's special envoy for Angola, is chairing the talks which are being held under a virtual news blackout and tight security.

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

Troops to fight crime in Moscow

MOSCOW (R) — Moscow city authorities are calling in paratroops to help police patrol the streets of Moscow and curb the city's rising crime rate, the Russian Defence Ministry said Friday. A ministry spokesman said the city had promised an extra 300,000 square metres (3.2 million square feet) of living space to the armed forces in return for their help. The army is in desperate need of flats for soldiers returning from former Soviet republics and Eastern Europe. The move was decided at a meeting of security officials Thursday. As well as escorting police in regular patrols, especially at night, they would take part in some police raids. "They will not be conscripts but experienced soldiers, paratroops, and they will carry sidearms," the spokesman said.

Avalanches kill 23 in Russia, Georgia

VLADIKAVKAZ, Russia (AP) — A series of avalanches in southern Russia and neighbouring Georgia killed at least 23 people, officials said Friday, and more may be buried under tonnes of melting snow and rock. The dead included 18 people aboard a passenger bus and two Russian soldiers on guard at the entrance to a tunnel along the 20-kilometre stretch of the Trans-Caucasian Highway in the North Ossetia region of Russia buried by a series of avalanches. The Moscow-based Committee for Emergency Situations said a third soldier from the same guard unit was hospitalized. Rescue teams trying to clear the highway Friday were expected to find more vehicles under the snow, said Arkady Tabolov, deputy prime minister of North Ossetia. The civil defence chief in North Ossetia, Col. Yuri Megrei, said rescuers were working feverishly to reach the buried there.

The bomb blast wrecks Nice restaurant

NICE, France (AP) — A restaurant was severely damaged early Friday by an explosion, the 11th unsolved blast in this Riviera city in three weeks. Authorities said no one was injured in the 1:30 a.m. blast, caused by what police described as a well-designed bomb with about 300 grammes of explosives. Targets of the previous explosions have included shops, snack bars and government buildings. Police say they are not sure of the motive for the attacks. Possibilities suggested by the local press include an organised-crime protection racket and an offensive by Corsican separatists. A contingent of 150 members of the National Riot Police was deployed in Nice two weeks ago in response to the bombings.

Experts stop oil flow from tanker

SINGAPORE (AP) — The flow of crude oil from a crippled Danish supertanker was stopped Friday, the owners of the ship announced. A crack in tank No. 4 on the left side vessel was patched, said a statement from the A.P. Moller Co. "Remaining dispersing around the vessel will be dealt with by spraying dispersing materials," the company said. A few tonnes of oil an hour had been flowing into the sea from the Maersk Navigator, which collided with another tanker about 3 a.m. on Jan. 21. More than 25,000 tonnes of oil is estimated to have poured through holes in the ship's port side, most of which burned or evaporated or is dissipating.

Ecologists soar in French opinion polls

PARIS (R) — France's environmentalists have caught up with the ruling Socialist Party in public support but will garner far fewer seats in March's parliamentary elections because of the electoral system, two new opinion polls show.

A CSA poll published Thursday put support for the United Ecologist List, a relative newcomer in French politics, at 19 per cent compared with 17 per cent for the embattled Socialists.

A BVA poll for Paris-Match magazine published Wednesday also showed the Ecologists on 19 per cent but put the Socialists marginally ahead with 19.5.

The main opposition centre-right, widely forecast to win the elections, commands about 40 per cent of the vote.

Both surveys indicated a surge in support for the two main environmentalist parties, Generation Ecologie and Les Verts, whose rise has mirrored the Socialists' spectacular fall after 11 years' domination of French politics.

But the environmentalists are likely to be penalised by France's twin-ballot constituency voting system because their support is spread too evenly around the country.

The CSA poll estimated the two parties would win a total of seven seats in the 577-seat National Assembly, compared with 110 for the Socialists and associated groups.

BVA political director Pierre Giacometti said the scale of a conservative victory would depend on whether the Ecologists and the Socialists agreed on a mutual support pact on the second ballot.

Yeltsin wants closer ties with India, China

NEW DELHI (R) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin urged India Friday to move closer to China, as Moscow is doing, to transform the world's three biggest countries into a powerful force for global stability.

"Mutual trust, good neighbourliness, in a purely peaceful form, of the three largest nations in the world could become a stabilising factor not just in Asia but worldwide," Mr. Yeltsin told parliament on the last of three days in New Delhi.

Since the late 1980s, India and China have started to warm up their long-chilly relationship. One of India's main concerns in forging a close friendship with the Soviet Union in the 1970s was protection against its mighty neighbour, which it fought a border war in 1962.

Mr. Yeltsin, who says ideology is being erased from post-Soviet Russian policy, improved his own country's relations with Peking during a state visit last December. He suggested a trouble-shooting centre be set up in one of the three states.

"In the past few years there has been a shift in relations between India and China. The inertia of decades of distrust is being overcome. Russia applauds this, especially as for 35 years we did not have trust," he said.

Mr. Yeltsin has stressed



ON GUARD: A Croatian guardsman observes the frontline in the village of Stabrijna Thursday. The village which was seized by Serb forces

Wednesday was recaptured by Croat forces Friday (AFP photo)

De Klerk cracks down on violence

CAPE TOWN (R) — President F.W. De Klerk announced Friday a sweeping security crackdown in South Africa, but warned whites frightened by soaring crime that democracy was the only alternative to "devastating war."

Opening the 1993 session of the white-dominated parliament, Mr. De Klerk said he was optimistic multi-party democracy talks which broke down last May could resume in March.

"The simple truth is that a devastating war will ensue if negotiation does not succeed," Mr. De Klerk told white, coloured (mixed race) and Indian legislators in the parliament that still excludes the five-to-one black majority.

He said the successful resumption of multi-party negotiations in March could bolster his November timetable for agreement on a transitional government by September and the first all-race elections early in 1994.

Mr. De Klerk announced a series of measures to further dismantle the apartheid system instituted by his ruling National Party in 1948 and to contain crime and violence in which 19,000 people died last year.

He said segregated health and agriculture ministries and scores of racially-defined local governments would be merged on April 1 and the country's race-based

education system, a cornerstone of apartheid, would be largely integrated by March 31 next year.

"While moving away from the racial basis of education, differentiated education based on religious and cultural values... will remain a right for those who desire it," Mr. De Klerk said.

He said the administration of housing and welfare, which is available to different races at varied levels, would remain segregated, "for the time being."

Constitutional Development Minister Roelf Meyer, who heads the government team in preparation for democracy talks, said the cabinet had not decided the fate of civil servants who could be made redundant by the rationalisation.

Mr. De Klerk said he would publish a proposal within days for a bill of rights and would launch a national campaign to inform South Africans about the "purpose and functions of human rights."

Justice Minister Kobie Coetsee told reporters at a briefing that parliament would be consulted on the principle of a bill of rights and parties outside of parliament, including the ANC, would be consulted on the content.

Urging leaders of the warring African National Congress (ANC) and Inkatha Freedom Party to stop blaming others for

their bloody conflict, Mr. De Klerk said: "Crime and violence... more than anything else, hangs like a dark cloud over our land."

In a bid to halt the spiral of criminal and political violence that killed one in every 2,000 South Africans last year, he announced:

— A minimum sentence of five years in jail for the illegal possession of an automatic weapon.

— A national network of community groups trained and, in some cases armed, to help police fight crime.

— Speedier trials and tougher sentences including life imprisonment for people accused of serious crimes including violence.

— The possible reintroduction of the death penalty, which was suspended when Mr. De Klerk came to power in 1989.

— Financial and security support for farmers who have borne the brunt recently of attacks from impoverished black homelands.

Law and Order Minister Herens Kriel said the government would try to draw the ANC's controversial self-defence units, which include former guerrillas, into a system of civilian crime prevention managed by the police.

He said township anti-crime groups would be offered training and, in some circumstances, weapons to fight violence.

Major, woman caterer sue for libel

LONDON (R) — Prime Minister John Major has launched rare libel proceedings against two British magazines that repeated rumours he had an extra-marital affair.

The woman, the articles, Clare, also announced through lawyers that she would sue New Statesman and Society and satirical magazine Scallywag and its distributors.

It was believed to be the first libel action by a serving prime minister since then Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson's sued a pop group over a record promotion in 1967.

In statements from their respective lawyers Mr. Major and Ms. Latimer announced the writs, making clear they want to end once and for all the long-running but unsubstantiated rumours.

Steve Platt, editor of the New Statesman, said the magazine had no intention of libelling Mr. Major and would contest the action vigorously. He said it was a story about press coverage of rumours and rumour-mongering.

Other publications have hinted at the rumours about Mr. Major, 49, and the woman but the New Statesman article was the first to put all the elements of the story together.

"Our story is about the story behind the story, the anatomy of a rumour," Mr. Platt said. "Our piece was not about whether or not he was having an affair. We say no one has produced a shred of evidence to say that he is."

Comag, the distributor of the New Statesman, said it had yet to receive writs and had made no decision about whether to withdraw the magazine which sold out quickly in the Westminster government district Thursday.

Leading newsgroup WH Smith and John Menzies said they were withdrawing the issue.

Mr. Major's Downing Street office has confirmed that Mr. Major and Ms. Latimer know each other but says there is no truth in suggestions they have had an "association." Her business caters for Downing Street and other government functions.

Lawyers for Mr. Major swung into action overnight while he was on his last stop of a tour of India.

The New Statesman story quoted Ms. Latimer as saying: "I'm sorry but I can't talk to anyone about it. The whole thing is just ridiculous because it is totally untrue."

Politicians denounced publication of the rumours, published when the British press is under fire over alleged intrusion into the privacy of the royal family and others.

Leading conservative politician Sir Marcus Fox said he hoped Mr. Major would go all the way in the case. "I look forward to him getting substantial damages."

The affair could prove a fatal blow to the struggling left-leaning New Statesman magazine which celebrates its 80th anniversary this year.

Its circulation has shrunk to 22,000 — a quarter of its peak — and the Major article was the cover story of a relaunch being celebrated with a party at parliament Thursday night.

Scallywag, a satirical magazine, was unrepentant.

"We are defiant," said editor Simon Regan. "We will answer any writ we get. If Mr. Major wishes to go into the witness box to defend himself I will cross examine him personally."

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COLUMN

S. Korea saves 700-year-old 'howling' ginkgo tree

SEOUL (R) — A two-year rescue plan to save a 700-year-old "howling" ginkgo tree from drowning looks to have paid off, South Korean newspapers said. According to folklore, the tree inexplicably howls at times of national disaster — it apparently did so when Japan invaded in 1952 and when the Korean War broke out in 1950. Many feared the construction of a nearby dam spelt the end for the 37-metre (120-foot) tall ginkgo, designated by the government as Natural Monument Number 173 and known as "the tree of spirit." As waters from the Imha Dam near Andong, 190 kilometres east of Seoul, gradually submerged the village, where the tree stood, a local company took up the challenge. Workers using hydraulic jacks have spent the past two years carefully levering up the tree and shoring up the roots with earth, creating a man-made island. The roots have held up and workers are confident the tree, which now stands 16 metres above the waves, will survive, the Korea Herald newspaper said.

Spanish music TV network planned

SAN FRANCISCO (R) — MTV networks said it will create a 24-hour Spanish-language MTV music television, to be distributed in the United States and Latin America. MTV Latin America is to be launched in October and will be targeted at viewers aged 12 to 34. The music video network will be distributed in Mexico, the Caribbean, Central America, South America, excluding Brazil, and the United States. The new service will be the sixth global network owned by MTV, a division of Viacom International Inc. The others are MTV Europe, MTV Brazil, MTV Australia, MTV Japan and MTV Asia. MTV Latin America will feature English-language pop and Latin music, local and regional production, music and entertainment news, artist interviews, concert coverage and specials presented by video jockeys from all over Latin America.

Love-struck Japanese are saying it with rice

TOKYO (AP) — Roses are red, violets are blue, rice is sticky and tastes nice with seaweed... The slogan may need some work, but an agricultural cooperative in northern Japan is sure it has come up with a winner of a Valentine's Day gift in a kind of rice called "love at first sight." The cooperative has shipped 30,000 special gift-size packages of the rice to stores, where they will be sold next to chocolates and other more conventional symbols of affection. The set includes 200 grams (7 ounces) of pre-steamed rice and a packet of "furikake" — a favourite Japanese rice topping made of ground seaweed and fish flakes — that has been blessed by a Shinto priest to enhance its aphrodisiac powers. The packages go on sale on Feb. 1 for 300 yen (\$2.40) each. Unlike in the West, in Japan it is women who offer gifts, usually chocolates, to men on Valentine's Day. Men reciprocate a month later on "White Day." In the past, Japanese stores have been graced with a number of novelty Valentine's Day and White Day gift items, including edible underwear, chocolates for dogs and a bra that plays Mozart when a button in the middle is pushed. This variety of rice has become wildly popular since it was developed two years ago. The developers of the rice came up with the idea to market it as a Valentine's Day gift later.

Scientists make tiniest drinking straws

TOKYO (R) — Japanese scientists say they have shown that a new kind of tiny carbon tube can suck up molten metal like a drinking straw, possibly showing a way to cast the finest of fine electrical wiring. The so-called "carbon nanotubes" are 10 to 20 Angstroms in diameter (10 billion Angstroms make one metre) and consist of hexagonal lattices of carbon atoms arranged spirally to form a cylinder. The tubes are usually sealed at the ends, but scientists here managed to get them to suck up lead, said Saito Iijima of NEC Corp's Fundamental Research Laboratories who presented the results in the Jan. 28 edition of the magazine Nature.